By Andrea Reeve

As lockdown measures began this past March, I was starting a Ritual Studies course at Radboud University in the Netherlands. I needed to propose a project that was viable with only online correspondence, and no access to the locked-up university library. I had also learned about the severity of coronavirus in Quebec, and was concerned for the extended community of which I am a part. Given these circumstances, I chose to research changes in ritual resulting from COVID-19, as experienced by members of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec.

There were two topics I wanted to explore: What were the changes to the now-online Anglican services, and how were these changes experienced by the congregation? Also, as no one was permitted to visit the ill or elderly, or attend funerals, how were people coping with denying traditional death and dying rites?

A couple of months into the lockdown I conducted interviews with two members of clergy, as well as twenty congregants. I personally knew about a quarter of those interviewed, however all information from laypeople was anonymized before it was referenced. I must also mention that while I study religion, I am not formally associated with the diocese, or any religious tradition. I am, however, part of a small summer community on the Lower Saint Lawrence, for which the local Anglican church serves a central part of village life.

Virtual liturgy

Moving to an online format was an enormous adjustment for everyone, and there was little time in which to make the transition. Only one day passed between the announcement for, and broadcast of the first service. Many wanted to socialize, but a diocese-wide chatroom during the service and navigated proper chatroom use.

By Andrea Reeve

Student Abroad

As someone aiming to study religious death rites, I was alarmed when I learned how coronavirus measures affected Quebec, particularly the restrictions on visiting the ill, elderly or dying. Further, almost no funerals were permitted; death seemed poised to strike due to the pandemic, yet the dead were not given traditional rites and were effectively ritually ignored.

As I composed the interview, I hoped that there would be few affected by these measures. Instead, to my dismay, every single response indicated that either a visit to an ill or elderly loved one was cancelled (90%), or that a funeral was missed (70%). One person missed five funerals; they made an interesting comment, suggesting that when the measures are finally lifted, it will be challenging—because there will be so many funerals to attend.

If I had known how universally these concerns would be felt, I would have asked more targeted questions. What I did ask, however, relates to a more implicit ritual: will amendment. This was a sneaky question, yet I was consistently offered great detail. A majority (60%) were at least considering amending their will, and some (20%) volunteered that they had recently created their first will. I would speculate that this relates to frustration regarding remote worship or lack of visitation and funerals. New forms of spirituality have been explored, and the importance of family, singing, meditation and prayer are being (re-)discovered. Questions are being asked by clergy and lay alike; What is important? What have we been neglecting? Where do we go from here?

The issues being faced by the diocese, whether regarding remote worship or lack of visitation and funerals, boil down to issues of intimacy. We must acknowledge that the temporary solutions are no replacement for being in the same physical space with people we love during critical times.

What presented the greatest problem for the congregation, was the use of Facebook as a platform of worship. There was a learning curve, as people dealt with distraction during the service and navigated proper chatroom use. Many wanted to socialize, but a diocese-wide chatroom limits what one should say. Some unexpected chat behaviour emerged, for example, making jokes at the bishop’s expense while he was giving a sermon. This would not be well-received in a traditional service; what was socially acceptable changed without spoken agreement.

The reason why Facebook presents such a problem, is because it already was a place of ritualized behaviour; complete with its own routines, associations and head-space. Hosting religious worship here gives rise to conflict between rituals. What fascinated me, is that without being told to do so, 90% of those interviewed performed what I called a ‘pre-ritual rite’: they had a series of things they did before every service, such as collecting certain items or performing specific activities. This helped to carve out space on Facebook in which religious worship could flourish.

This may speak to ease of access, increased free time during quarantine, or a greater spiritual need in times of uncertainty.

To be sure, the rites within the service changed, but for the most part congregants did not comment on this. There was great anxiety among clergy relating to the lack of eucharist, but only a quarter of respondents mentioned this, even when urged to complain about anything of their choosing. Only two were acutely upset by not receiving the Host, whereas most people preferred to complain about—or alternatively praise—social elements of the service. Typically, this took the form of grieving the absence of physical gatherings, or celebrating the ability to connect with others through song or intercessory prayers.

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Despite the grief of enforced isolation, creative solutions have been reached. Many respondents mentioned video-calling fellow parishioners, or friends. Some attended other virtual churches, or indeed virtual funerals. New forms of spirituality have been explored, and the importance of family, singing, meditation and prayer are being (re-)discovered. Questions are being asked by clergy and lay alike; What is important? What have we been neglecting? Where do we go from here?

The issues being faced by the diocese, whether regarding remote worship or lack of visitation and funerals, boil down to issues of intimacy. We must acknowledge that the temporary solutions are no replacement for being in the same physical space with people we love during critical times. I can attest to this myself, being stranded overseas during this pandemic. However, the opportunity to conduct interviews and view services with everyone has been an immense boon. My thanks to those who agreed to be interviewed, providing me with remarkable data, and the chance to connect with the greater Anglican Diocese of Quebec community.

By Andrea Reeve

Virtual liturgy

Moving to an online format was an enormous adjustment for everyone, and there was little time in which to make the transition. Only one day passed between the announcement for, and broadcast of the first service. Given this, the popularity of the online (or phone-in) services was remarkable; both clergy interviewed believed that more people were attending services virtually than there would be if churches were physically open.

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Study shows how COVID has changed way we worship, grieve

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I miss you

There’s one of those illuminated Transports Québec signs on the side of a highway on the outskirts of Quebec City that I usually pass by once a week. Since the earliest days of the pandemic, it has unrelentingly flashed the same message to passing motorists day and night: LIMITEZ VOS DEPLACEMENTS – COVID-19.

As a part of the effort to limit the spread of the coronavirus, public health officials have asked us to stay close to home and to travel as little as possible. It’s advice I’ve done my best to follow. Since the COVID-19 pandemic officially began late March, I haven’t ventured much more than an hour’s drive from my home in Quebec City.

This has perhaps been the hardest part of the pandemic for me. As bishop of a geographically vast diocese, in a typical year I use a half-dozen different modes of transportation to visit parishes all over the province of Quebec. In 2020, extended trips I had planned to Kawawachikanam, the North Shore, the Gaspé, the Magdalen Islands were all cancelled, not to mention shorter pastoral visits I’d normally make to parishes between Quebec City and the U.S. border, and to a summer congregation on Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Life in Quebec City is not exactly a hardship, and the online home prayers offered each Sunday morning have connected many of us across the diocese in a new and somewhat unexpected way. But with each passing month of dutifully staying put, I realize just how much of my ministry as your bishop is bound up with spending time with the people of this diocese, in the places where you live and work and worship, and how one of the things I love most about serving as your bishop is travelling to each uniquely beautiful part of this diocese.

And how much I really miss you all.

I was recently reminded that the apostle Paul was sometimes prevented (not by a pandemic, mind you) from visiting some of the Christian communities for which he had not only oversight, but also great affection. In his first pastoral letter to the church at Thessalonica, Saint Paul wrote, “As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you—in person, not in heart—we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face, for we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again—but Satan blocked our way.” (1 Thess. 2:17)

While I won’t pin pandemic travel restrictions on the devil, I certainly do resonate with Paul’s longing to see his sisters and brothers in the faith “face to face,” rather than just on Facebook or Zoom. And like Paul, I’ve felt separated from so many of you in the diocese only “in person, not in heart.” You’ve been regularly in my prayers, and each Sunday I’ve led home prayers online or on the telephone, I’ve felt connected with you all in a real if imperfect way.

Paul the apostle never did make it back to Thessalonica. I, on the other hand, am looking forward with great eagerness to resuming my in-person visits across the diocese once public health authorities indicate it is prudent to do so. At the same time, I’ll be taking the opportunity to ask if there are more sustainable and ecologically sound means and patterns of travelling, recognizing that going back to exactly the way things were before the pandemic isn’t always the most responsible option.

In the meantime, God willing, I’ll look forward to seeing you once again face to face in 2021.

FROM THE BISHOP

Il y a un panneau lumineux de Transports Québec identique à celui-ci sur le bord d’une autoroute située en périphérie de Québec que j’emprunte habituellement une fois par semaine. Depuis les premiers jours de la pandémie a, il diffusait sans relâche le même message aux automobilistes, de jour comme de nuit: LIMITEZ VOS DEPLACEMENTS – COVID-19.

Dans le cadre des efforts mis en œuvre pour limiter la propagation du coronavirus, les responsables de la santé publique nous ont demandé de rester près de chez nous et de voyager le moins possible. C’est une recommandation que j’ai essayée de suivre de mon mieux. Depuis le début officiel de la pandémie du COVID-19 en mars dernier, je ne me suis pas aventure à plus d’une heure de route de chez moi.

Cela a peut-être été l’élément qui m’a donné le plus de difficulté pendant cette pandémie. En tant qu’évêque d’un diocèse géographiquement vaste, j’utilise, au cours d’une année typique, une demi-douzaine de moyens de transport différents pour visiter des congrégations situées partout dans les 720 000 kilomètres carrés de notre territoire. En 2020, les voyages prolongés que j’avais prévus faire à Kawawachikanakam, sur la Côte-Nord, en Gaspésie et aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine ont tous été annulés, ceci sans parler des visites pastorales plus courtes que j’aurais données comme abrutissement dans les paroisses localisées entre Québec et la frontière américaine, et à une ou deux congrégations estivales.

Mais vivre à Québec ne peut pas être considéré comme une éprouve, et les prières à domicile en ligne organisées chaque dimanche matin ont permis à bon nombre d’entre nous à travers le diocèse de rester en contact d’une manière nouvelle et quelque peu inattendue. Mais chaque mois passé à rester consciencieusement en place me fait réaliser à quel point mon ministère épiscopal est lié au temps passé auprès des gens de ce diocèse, dans les endroits où vous vivez, où vous travaillez et où vous exercez le culte, et que l’une des choses que j’aime le plus de mon rôle d’évêque, c’est de voyager dans chacune des magnifiques localités de ce diocèse.

Et à quel point je m’ennuie de vous tous et toutes.

Récemment, on m’a rappelé que l’apôtre Paul a lui aussi parfois été empêché (mais pas par une pandémie, remanque) de visiter certaines des communautés chrétiennes dont il était non seulement responsable, mais aussi pour lesquelles il éprouvait une grande affection. Dans sa première lettre pastorale à l’église de Thessalonique, Saint Paul a écrit: ‘Pour nous, frères, séparés de vous pour un temps, loin des yeux mais non du cœur, nous avons redoublé d’efforts pour aller vous voir, car nous en avions un vif désir. C’est pourquoi nous vous avons voulu nous rendre chez vous – moi-même, Paul, à plusieurs reprises – et Satan nous en a empêché.’ (1 Thessaloniciens 2:17)

Bien que je ne mette pas sur le diable le blâme des restrictions sur les voyages pendant la présente pandémie, je reconnais avec force le même désir que Paul de rencontrer ses sœurs et ses frères dans la foi “face à face”, plutôt que simplement sur Facebook ou Zoom. Et comme Paul, vous êtes tous, partout dans le diocèse “loin des yeux, mais non du cœur”. Vous êtes régulièrement dans mes prières, et à chaque dimanche où je dirigeais des prières à la maison en ligne ou au téléphone, je me suis senti connecté avec vous tous et toutes d’une manière réelle, bien qu’imparfaite.

L’apôtre Paul n’est finalement jamais revenu à Thessalonique. En revanche, moi j’ai très hâte de reprendre mes visites en personne dans le diocèse une fois que les autorités de la santé publique auront indiqué qu’il est possible de le faire. À la même occasion, j’en profiterai pour voir s’il existe des moyens de voyager plus écologiques et plus respectueux de l’environnement, car je reconnais que faire les choses exactement comme avant la pandémie n’est pas toujours l’option la plus responsable.

En attendant, si Dieu le veut, j’ai hâte de vous revoir face à face en 2021.

DE L’ÉVÊQUE

THE GAZETTE • JANUARY 2021

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The mandate of The Gazette shall be to serve as a means of encouragement, communication, and community building among the regions of the diocese, with special emphasis on regional activities and matters of concern for both laymen and clergy. It shall provide an opportunity for the bishop to address the people of the diocese directly and seek to cover items from outside the diocese that bear on its corporate life. The Gazette shall provide a channel for information and a forum for discussion, shall be encouraged to express a wide range of opinion within the diocese, and shall enjoy editorial independence. (Canon 22 of the Synod of the Diocese of Quebec)
HALLOWEEN ATTACK IN VIEUX-QUÉBEC

By Christian Schreiner
Dean and Rector of the Parish of Quebec

"Not again!" was my first thought when a phone call woke me up on All Saints’ Sunday. Jean Thivierge, sexton at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, had called to tell me that two murders had occurred, during the night, in the Old City, around the cathedral. A man dressed in a cape and carrying a samurai sword had killed two people and badly injured five others. As it was Halloween, no one thought to question a man wandering around town carrying a giant bloody sword.

Mayor Régis Labeaume, later that day, said it felt a bit like an old movie. Once again Quebec City, our peaceful city—with one of the lowest crime rates in North America—was faced with acts of horrible violence. Less than three years before, six people were murdered and 20 more wounded in a shooting rampage at Quebec City’s Grand Mosque.

Jean Thivierge said that there was police tape all around the cathedral close; nobody could get in. Would there be a worship service this morning? Pierre Voyer, parish priest of the francophone Paroisse de Tous Les Saints, had been forced to cancel the service—because he was not allowed to leave his home, which is literally inside a peaceful prayer place, with violence having happened less than hours before.

I called Bishop Bruce, who was in his car driving into town. "I’ll see how far I get," he said, “but I think the church should definitely be open!”

A few hours later, the allowed maximum of 25 met inside the cathedral for a strange, intense, sad and beautiful service of morning prayer. We really needed to be together that morning. One parishioner describes the beautiful service of morning prayer. We really needed to be together that morning. One parishioner describes the experience thus:

"From where I was sitting, I have the image of you standing in front of the altar, with the stained-glass window behind that; and of course the thought that a murdered person had been lying in close to the other side of the window. The reciprocation of us inside a peaceful prayer place, with violence having happened less than 12 hours earlier just feet away."

A few days later, another parishioner approached me.

"I feel like our cathedral close has been tainted by violence; it there a way of blessing and somehow reclaiming our collective space?"

She was inspired by a parishioner who lived close by, who had already begun walking the streets of Old Quebec in order to reclaim them. But now I understood that this was something we all had to do together.

"I would like us to meet and walk around our city together in silence, in the darkness of the night, carrying candles to reassure ourselves and each other that we are together, in solidarity. We are not alone."

And here’s what’s different about Quebec City in 2020 compared with Quebec City in 2017: When I woke up to the phone call, in January 2017, telling me about the horrific mosque attacks, I wanted to call my Muslim friends—and had to realize that I did not have any Muslim friends. But in the years since, many friendships have been forged. Now, we are in the habit of reaching out to each other when we are in need of community.

So I connected with my friends from other faith communities: Boufelfja Benabdallah (Grand Mosque), David Weiser (Beth Israel Ohev Sholom synagogue), Cardinal Gérald Cyprien Lacroix (Roman Catholic Diocese of Quebec), Marie-Émilie Lacroix (Innu from the community of Maskateuaitsh), Katherine Burgess (St. Andrew’s Presbyterian), Darla Sloan (Eglise Unie St Pierre) and city councillor Jean Rousseau. They all agreed that something should be done, and soon. I felt strongly that it should be open to everyone; any kind of religious service would have been limited to 25 people—and really complicated to put together on short notice. So, instead I decided to simply tell my story and see how my friends felt about it:

I have lived in Quebec for 16 years. I work in the Old City, and live in Saint-Roch. I walk in the streets of my city every day. This year, everything changed. Because of covid-19, the restaurants are closed, the hotels are closed, and the businesses on Saint-Jean, La Fabrique, closed, and the businesses on Saint-Jean, La Fabrique.

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They’re in Mexico now, and they didn’t even have to quarantine. I’m still here in COVID winter. But their hesitation in the sky is something I won’t forget. Perhaps they were angels. The routine of our COVID days bares all our anguish, our sad hymnlessness, our loneliness, our broken resolutions and our ungenerosity with our closest bubble-mates to the sombre light of day.

And God’s angels, passing by, see us as we flail our broken way through this time. They forget all their rules, their virtuous plans, and get untidy with compassion. They topple, they lurch out of line with sheer affection, they start dropping helplessly through the sky with love. Who’s that making that terrible noise down there? She sounds a bit like one of us. They hesitate. Shall we scoop her up now?

Some of us will go with them. I’m staying on to try and work out these chords.

FAITHFUL REFLECTIONS

Snow goose (Photo: Needpix.com)

Untidy with love

By Louisa Blair
Columnist

I’m really bad at the accordion. I won’t even tell you some of things my family have said about my accordion playing. The only place I can practice is outside, and even there, only when there’s no one for miles around.

But it’s getting trickier as the weather gets colder. My hands freeze and make ever more noisy mistakes. So the other evening I made a bonfire and sat down on a haybale to play, all by myself. I would have been staring soulfully into the flames if I hadn’t been concentrating so hard. When you’re singing and playing the accordion, you have to focus on many body parts all doing different things at once: your keyboard hand blindly feeling for invisible buttons organized in 5ths, your arms working the bellows, and your voice trying to remember the words. This level of concentration seems to do something to my face too, it’s one of the things my family laughs at the most.

But with no one listening I went wild. First I demolished a heap of my favourite hymns—I so miss singing hymns—and then I added a branch to the fire before starting to pulverize a few folksongs.

I was in the middle of Un Canadien Errant when I heard the snow geese. They have been flying over us for weeks and weeks, and this must have been one of the last flocks to leave. They were in perfect V-formation directly above me, but as they flew over they slowed down, they wobbled, their V broke up, and they began to sink down, honking loudly. I didn’t stop playing, I was finally getting that difficult chord change. The geese slowly pulled away, but they circled over me twice more before they finally left.

Did my playing sound like a sick goose who needed help? Never mind, they recognized a kindred spirit, an errant lonely goose-like creature banished into the cold, honking into the north wind, and they were inviting me to join them. Who’s that making that terrible noise down there?

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Cacouna wins CPRQ award of excellence for restoration

By Andrew Reeve & Peter Jones
Warden of St. James the Apostle, Cacouna

A little over two years ago, we provided the Diocesan Gazette with an update on our ongoing restoration project. Since then, we have continued to invest in the future of our summer parish, and we would like to provide you with the latest news.

St. James is the only English-language Anglican church between Quebec City and Métis. The church itself was built in 1865 as a multi-denominational church serving the bustling 19th-century summer community in Cacouna. Our 150th anniversary was celebrated in 2015. At that time, it became clear that major renovations were needed for the building and the parsonage. In order for our house of worship to survive the ravages of time, we decided to enter a competition to highlight and acknowledge the amazing commitment, innovation, and passion Quebecers have for their religious heritage. In July we decided to enter the St. James Restoration Project.

We have more exciting news to share. Since 2013, the CPRQ has run the Prix d’excellence (www.patri-moine-relieux.qc.ca/en/events/awards-of-excellence), a competition to acknowledge the amazing commitment, innovation, and passion Quebecers have for their religious heritage. In July we decided to enter the St. James Restoration Project.

The “virtual gala” was held on October 28th and to our surprise, we came out as the winners against seven other very strong entries in the restoration category! It is an acknowledgement to our membership, our past wardens, engaged parishioners, our parish, our diocese, the Anglican Foundation of Canada, and the community of Cacouna that when we all work together, we can accomplish much good.

Regrettably, with the global pandemic, the doors of our church were closed tightly for the summer worship season. For that reason, the restoration project ground to a halt in 2020. Fortunately, there is one more year of funding support from the CPRQ and our supporters have continued to generously contribute. With this continued support, we aim to scratch off as many of the items on our “restoration to-do list” in 2021 as we can. Hopefully at this time next year, we will be able to update you on our 2021 Restoration Project accomplishments and our community, as well as all others across the country, will be able to come back and meet and worship together after a long pause.

Anglican Foundation continues faithful support of diocese

By Judy Rois
Executive Director
Anglican Foundation of Canada

At the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) we love, more than anything, to say Yes! to nearly $250,000 in grants and loans for your parish. The vast majority has been invested in buildings and programs, including outreach to refugees and infrastructure projects that have helped to preserve diocesan heritage. Additionally, AFC supported a pilot project for the digitalization of the diocesan newspaper, magazines, and church registers to meet the requirements of the Indigenous Settlement Agreement. AFC was pleased to support the All Saints’ Memorial garden on the Magdalen Islands, the day camp for Syrian refugees at Quebec Lodge for three consecutive years, a puppet drama and music workshop for youth at Holy Trinity Cathedral, and a number of student bursaries at Laval University.

This past May, in spite of the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis and the impact on AFC’s investment portfolio, we said Yes! to a restoration project at St. Matthias Church and Canon Gustin Hall in the Eastern Townships community of Fitch Bay.

For nearly 10 years now as Executive Director of the Foundation, I’ve had a front-row seat to some of the Canadian church’s best ideas: the ministries and programs parish visionaries might undertake if only they had some strategic funding to help them get started. Knowing
Church hall provides new home for imperilled theology books

By Ruth Sheeran
Rural Dean of St Francis

Two thousand antiquarian books in search of a home—the challenge that faced Father Edward Simon-ton and myself when the Bishop's University Library had to dispose of a large number of theological books. These volumes had found their way into the university’s care over the course of a century and a half as a result of the changing fortunes of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec. The collection included many rare and valuable items, so an ambitious project was conceived to preserve these volumes and make them available in the hall at the Church of St. George in Lennoxville.

A very successful fundraising campaign was undertaken which canvassed the priests trained at Bishop's as well as other interested people. With the collected funds, glass-fronted bookcases were purchased to house the books on the main floor of the church hall. In order to create the appropriate atmosphere, portraits (reproductions) of the Right Reverend George Jeboshaphat Mountain, the Reverend Lucas Doolittle, and the Reverend Canon Dr. Scarth were hung in the hall. Oak tables and chairs the Bishop's Library no longer used were procured and, with the addition of carpets and lamps, the hall has been transformed into an appealing space reminiscent of a traditional library. This has been done without compromising any of the usual activities of the hall. The tables have been fitted with rollers, making them easy to move, and no space has been lost with the addition of the bookcases. Rummage sale? Christmas Bazaar? Guild tea? No problem!

During the COVID-19 summer, we were able to take advantage of a hall in the activities in the hall to complete our task. Fortunately, the Bishop's Library staff had compiled a database which contained all of the necessary bibliographic information for the 2,400 books. Shelving took several weeks, but with the enthusiastic assistance of the deanery administrative assistant and the sexton our task was successfully completed.

As we determined the previous owners, it quickly became evident that we were, in fact, assembling a bibliographic record of the intellectual life of our diocese. Quite apart from the inherent value of the texts, fascinating information was emerging thanks to the name plates, signed dedications, and donation plaques—information about the history and scholarly life of the Anglican clergy and parishioners over the past 150 years.

The Quebec Clerical Library was originally housed in the church hall of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Quebec City. The associates of Dr. Bray contributed many of the items; in fact, the rules of Dr. Bray's lending libraries were adopted for the management of the Quebec Clerical Library. In addition, over 1,900 volumes were donated by the Rev. Canon Thomas Richardson and many of these, now at St George's, bear his signature.

The books yielded information about many other interesting sources. The majority of the older volumes formed part of the Aylin Library. This library was established in Quebec City from the donation of the private collection of Quebec lawyer, politician, and judge, Thomas Cushing Aylin, an original member of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec and grandson of Thomas Aylin, one of the early British settlers in the city. The oldest title in our collection was published in 1603 and belonged to this library.

Forty books, some from the 17th century, belonged to the Rev. Jasper Hume Nicolls, the first principal of Bishop's University, and members of his family. A children's Bible bears the charming inscription: “For Jasper with Grandpapa's love 29 November 1891.” Many questions surround the other people whose books are now at St George's. Why did Robert Bevan (1784-1854), Earl of Rougham Near Bury, Saint Edmund's, donate books to the university? Who established the clerical library in La Tuque? Was William Sanders from La Chute a linguist as most of his books are classical language dictionaries? Who were Jack and Rose Cheam? And who was the mysterious Miss D. Racey who donated books in the 1940s?

In the 21st century, when information is cheap, it is humbling to reflect on the extent to which the former members of our diocese treasured books and engaged in intellectual pursuits. Lending libraries containing carefully selected titles were established across the diocese for the use of the clergy, and they were supported by individuals and institutions that understood the value of reading and learning. Large private collections were donated so others could benefit. In these times, when so much is instantly available in digital form and information pours unfiltered from the internet, books are often considered unfashionable. But we recognise it is an honour and a privilege to preserve this collection—an enduring testament to the significance our predecessors placed on the printed word.

The parish hall of St. George's in Lennoxville now doubles as a theological library. (Photo: Edward Simonton)
What to pray for (and how) in the midst of a pandemic?

By Samuel Borsman

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more people have been turning to prayer. According to Google analytics, there has been a 50% increase in online prayer requests. But what are we praying for? Are we praying that God will put an end to the virus? Are we praying for hope or solace? And what image of God informs our prayers? Do we approach God as a gigantic supermaker in the sky whom we, hope, receives our shopping list of petitions? These were some of the questions raised by the Reverend Canon Giuseppe Gagliano in his November workshop for lay readers in the Diocese of Quebec. We gathered on Zoom. For preparation, we had been asked to read a chapter on prayer from Rowan Williams’ deceptively simple Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer. Prayer is not, Williams insists, “acquiring a set of special spiritual skills that operate in one bit of your life.” Rather, it is nothing less than “growing into the kind of humanity that Christ shows us.” Challenging, indeed!

After addressing some of the assumptions that many of us have about prayer—that it is primarily about petition and ideally spontaneous and joyful—Father Giuseppe reminded us that prayer is both intimately personal and communal. We pray in secret to the God who is closer to us than we are to ourselves. But we also pray “Our Father” as the Body of Christ. We belong to a liturgical tradition founded, after all, on the Book of Common Prayer. We’re all in this together, even though some of us are praying alone with more frequency now.

In one of the cruel ironies brought on by the pandemic, we are becoming increasingly aware of our vulnerability and dependence on others, even as most of our churches are shuttered and our social lives curtailed. Phone calls, Zoom meetings, and online worship—as helpful as they are—have left many of us with a kind of digital acedia, a feeling of spiritual dryness and lack of rootedness brought on by online information overload. We are social animals and, as Christians, we profess an incarnational faith; we find the holy in the warmth of a friend’s hug, the touch of a caring hand, the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

Father Giuseppe concluded his workshop by asking, “How has the pandemic changed your personal practice of prayer, for good or ill?” Marilyn Mastine of Danville noted that she is trying to find God in the small things, while Spencer Nadeau of Lennoxville reflected on new layers of meaning that have opened up in his daily practice of saying the Lord’s Prayer. We all agreed that prayer cannot be a flight from the world. As the First Letter of John reminds us, “for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (4:20).

My prayer in these times is that the exhaustion, hopelessness, and anxiety that I feel when seeing yet another grim pandemic milestone on the news will not shut me down. I’ve realized with more clarity that hell is not other people; it is a self-closed in on itself, barricaded against the healing balm of God’s grace and the love of neighbours. So I pray for watchfulness and attentiveness to other’s needs, needs that may not be verbally expressed.

People pray for hope and healing in all kinds of ways. What is meaningful to one person may not resonate with another. A Facebook friend of mine posts pictures of teddy bears and puppies in baskets, featuring scriptural quotes mixed in with TGIF-style encouragement. That is her prayer. Another friend meditatively recites: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10) to assuage her anxiety. That is also prayer. And so, in its own way, was Father Giuseppe’s workshop. It nourished and fostered connection.

In her autobiography, St. Teresa of Avila defines prayer as “a close sharing between friends.” She was referring to prayerful communion between God and humanity, but I think it can also refer to any sharing of oneself on a deep level, online or otherwise. With my fellow workshop attendees, I pray that lay readers in the diocese may find new opportunities for close sharing in these difficult times.

De Myriam à Jésus: À la recherche de nos racines musicales religieuses

Par Irène Brisson

Organiste, Église Saint-Michel à Sillery

Les cantiques (hymnes) que nous chantons chaque dimanche hors-pandémie possèdent souvent une longue histoire qu’on peut faire remonter jusqu’aux temps bibliques : l’Ancien Testament abonde d’allusions à la musique, qu’il s’agisse du kinnor (une sorte de lyre) ou de la flûte de Youval (ou Jubal, Genèse 4:21), du chant de Myriam, sœur de Moïse et d’Aaron (Exode 15:20), des psaumes 145 à 150, sans doute de David lui-même, sont parmi les plus exubérants et les plus descriptifs en matière de musique. Hier comme aujourd’hui, ils invitent le fidèle à célébrer Dieu dans la joie, en chantant, en jouant des instruments et même dansant.

Ouvrons une Bible dans la section des psaumes : chaque psaume est précédé d’un entête mentionnant la présence fréquente d’instruments de musique. Quelques noms de « psalmistes », poètes ou musiciens sortent de l’anonymat : le sage Ethan l’Ezrachite (psaume 89), les fils de Koré — celui qui s’est révolté contre Moïse et Aaron — reçoivent le crédit de 11 psaumes, tandis que 12 psaumes (50, et 73 à 83) sont signés Asaph, un musicien de la cour de David. Plus de 70 sont attribués au roi lui-même.

Les psaumes comprennent des suppliques émouvantes et des appels au secours, comme le psaume 5 accompagné par les flûtes, et le psaume 6, avec cordes. Dans un mode plus joyeux, 53 « cantiques » rendent grâce à l’Éternel, à sa puissance, ou célèbrent une victoire. Les psaumes 145 à 150, sans doute de David lui-même, sont parmi les plus exubérants et les plus descriptifs en matière de musique. Hier comme aujourd’hui, ils invitent le fidèle à célébrer Dieu dans la joie, en chantant, en jouant des instruments et même dansant.

Au temps de Jésus, la pratique musicale semble inchangée, comme le conﬁrment plusieurs passages des évangiles : lors de la dernière cène, Jésus et ses disciples « chantèrent ensuite les chants de la fête, puis ils s’en allèrent au mont des oliviers » (Matthieu 26:30). C’est ensuite Paul qui écrit aux Éphésiens (5:19) : « Entrez-en vous par des psaumes, par des hymnes, et par des cantiques spirituels, chantant et célébrant de tout cœur les louanges du Seigneur. »

La musique originelle des psaumes a été en grande partie perdue, mais plusieurs entités nommées les airs sur lesquels certains se chantaient et leurs titres ont de quoi nous faire rire : « Bîche de l’aurore » (psaume 22), « Sur les lits » (psaumes 45 et 69), « Colombe des terribles lointains » (psaume 56)… À un psaume exaltant devait correspondre une mélodie ou une improvisation d’une grande richesse, tandis qu’un psaume long et répétitif devenait une simple récitation sur une note ou deux, avec quelques terminaisons à peine ornémentées, ce que nous appelons maintenant de la psalmodie.

De là est issu tout le système modal oriental et occidental sur lequel, au Moyen Âge, les musiciens ont forgé leur langue. Chanté en latin sous cette forme dans les monastères européens et durant les offices religieux dominicaux, le psaume s’est considérablement transformé aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles. La Réforme de Calvin et de Luther lui apportera un éclatage nouveau. Ce sera l’objet d’une prochaine chronique.
The Rev. Deacon John LeGresley 1928-2020
The Rev. Deacon John LeGresley died on Saturday, October 17, at the age of 92. A lifelong Anglican, John began serving as a lay reader in the Diocese of Quebec at the age of 16. In 1995 he was ordained to the diaconate, primarily serving the church of St. Andrew, New Carlisle. A funeral will take place later this year. In the meantime, you are invited to pray for the repose of John’s soul and for his family. Rest eternal grant unto him. O Lord, and let light perpetual shine up on him.

Responding to violence
from page 3

and Saint-Louis are closing, one by one. On the night of October 31, two residents of the Old City were murdered. Several others were badly wounded. Since then, our neighbourhood has felt even more like a ghost town. With the physical distancing measures, we were already isolated from one another. Now, when I walk through the streets I thought I knew, I hear the echo of my own footsteps. I see no-one. My friends, my neighbours, my fellow citizens are afraid. We are still in shock.

I would like us to meet and walk around our city together in silence, in the darkness of the night, carrying candles to reassure ourselves and each other that we are together, in solidarity. We are not alone.

We will of course respect the health measures. No speeches are necessary. We will let the silence speak. As fellow citizens, you are all invited. This is not an official function.

Walking in silence together, we will reclaim our peaceful city and lay the ghosts to rest. We will show that we are the beating heart of this city.

The response from my little gang of co-conspirators was overwhelmingly positive. So that’s what we did! Two weeks after the terrible attacks, about 200 people met behind the cathedral in the dark, carrying candles, paper lanterns and flashlights, and walked the streets to reclaim their city.

The next morning, Remembrance Sunday, after the service, the parishioners gathered in front of the cathedral for a rite of Restoration of Things Profaned (thanks a lot to Vicar General Edward Simonton for providing that beautiful liturgy!). After having blessed the cathedral close and sprinkled holy water, I proclaimed: “I declare this space restored to the use for which it has been dedicated and consecrated.”

People were laughing, crying, clapping their hands and whooping with joy—something we haven’t done a lot of in these difficult times.

The word of the Lord in Naskapi

With the help of his granddaughter, Guylaine, the Rev. Deacon Silas Nabinicaboo blesses newly revised and published copies of the Revised Common Lectionary for use by Naskapi-speaking worshippers. (Photo: contributed)

The Rev. Canon Fran Aird updated the history of St. James’ first written by her mother. (Photo: contributed)

Book launched to support Cape Cove cemetery

September 19th saw the on-line launch of a new book, St. James’ Anglican Church Cape Cove, QC: Our Story 1875-2011. This history of St. James, Cape Cove, was compiled by the Rev. Canon Fran Aird and builds on the translation texts clarifies some meanings and makes consistent some spellings. All three annual cycles of readings of the Revised Common Lectionary have been translated into Naskapi, and Deacon Silas was a part of the translation team. Copies are also available at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Quebec City for use by Naskapi-speaking worshippers. (Photo: contributed)

There have been very few burials in the past decades, and it has become increasingly difficult to trace descendants of those buried in Cape Cove, in the hopes that they would contribute to things like tombstone repair and general upkeep. Reaching out through Facebook, the SPEC, and articles such as this it is hoped to spread the word and raise awareness of this need. The diocese maintains a small fund for ‘orphan cemeteries,’ such as Cape Cove, but it barely covers the annual costs of mowing.

You can see an interview with Fran and Janet Harvey, Warden for the Parish of All Saints by-the-Sea, on the Friends of St. James’ Cemetery Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/capecovecemetary). The book is published in English and French, with a small section of pictures in the centre and the cover photo is of an original painting by the Gaspé artist, Linda Drophy.

In order to receive a copy of the book, please mail your cheque to the Parish of All Saints by-the-Sea, 236 chemin Bougainville, St-Georges-de-Malbaie, QC, G0C 2X0, or donate directly online through Caanal-Help, from the link to the Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec. A minimum donation of $20 will get you a book and a tax receipt. Please help spread the word...
Death notices offer glimpse of diocesan life a century ago

By Meb Reisner Wright
Dioecesan Historian

From the perspective of January 2021, the months ahead are fraught with uncertainty. Will the pandemic, which has shifted the past year, finally come to an end? Will the interminable fear of contagion and attendant pain of loss finally recede into the status of a bad dream? Our 2020 news was filled with statistics: numbers of those testing positive for COVID-19—those hospitalized, those entering intensive care, those moving to the post-acute care facilities...numbers of those hospitalizing, those testing negative for COVID-19—those continuing to work, those back to school, teachers in the classroom, a sense of normalcy...numbers of those who died: COVID-19 deaths, other causes of death; numbers of those who died in the presence of one or two others... numbers of those who died alone.

Other clerics whose obituaries appeared in 1920 were 74-year-old Canon James Hepburn (first posted on the Labrador coast in 1870) and the much younger Revd Norman Reginald Ward. “After an illness of three weeks of typhoid fever, at the Sherbrooke General Hospital, Norman Reginald Ward, Priest, passed away,” his obituary begins. A local boy, “he was of an athletic nature, playing on the Bishop’s University football team, and was captain of the hockey team for two years. He also won the College silver cup two years in succession in the annual road race...” After ordination, Ward served in Marlborough, on the Magdalen Islands and in Swayville, but in the fall and winter of 1916-17 had left the Diocese to take “post-graduate work at the General Seminary in New York” and, in 1919 “took charge of the parishes of Detroit and Cookston, Minnesota.” It was following a 1,900-mile journey home by motorcar that he had become ill “and was taken to the Sherbrooke General Hospital where he unexpectedly passed away.”

News of yet another unexpected death, reported in the October issue, would have touched Dioecesan readers with a special pang...

“The Bishop has received very distressing news from the Revd H.H. Corry, now a Missionary of the Canadian Church in the Diocese of Mid-Japan...” the article begins. “Their only son, Percivale, died on 25th August after seven days with acute cerebral meningitis. At the burial of the dear boy, all the people of the village were present and the children of the village, both Japanese and foreign, threw flowers into the grave until the little coffin was covered with them, and over time the children bare kept the little grave beautiful with fresh flowers...”

“...The hearts of all who know Mr and Mrs Corry and indeed the hearts of all who read about their sad trial will be deeply moved with loving sympathy for these devoted Missionaries who have so lately gone from our own Diocese... The Bishop asks for the earnest prayers of all readers of the Gazette in behalf of Mr and Mrs Corry...”

John Ballantyne of Grindstone, Magdalen Islands, and Edward Harper Wade of New Liverpool, both laymen, also received memorial tributes in 1920.

The former, as his obituary reveals, although “a man of remarkable vitality,” had suffered severe disability for many years. “Fortunately, however, his mental faculties remained unimpaired, and, up until the morning of his death, though deprived of the use of his limbs [through paralysis], was able to transact his own business, and for those last nine years earned his honest—though modest—salary while sitting in his chair...”

The latter, had been a prominent man of affairs both in his church and the community.

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“...the interment took place in the family lot in the Mount Vernon Cemetery, Quebec. The deceased is survived by Mrs Wade and four adult children...”

Whether short or long, gracefully written or perfunctory, these obituaries give insight into the lives and circumstances of our Diocesan family. They present a unique snapshot of who we were and what mattered to us communally in those days.

There was no apparent reason for so many obituaries in 1920: no outbreak of illness or widespread catastrophe. It must be coincidence that these many deaths—)

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