



L'Arche at Fifty: One heart at a time



Jean Vanier, photo by Warren Pot



Jody & Laurie, L'Arche Calgary

continued on page 2

L'Arche at Fifty: One heart at a time

"We are simply human beings, enfolded in weakness and in hope, called together to change our world one heart at a time."
-Jean Vanier, *Becoming Human*

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of one man's act of compassion, which blossomed into something beyond his wildest dreams.

Jean Vanier was born in 1928 to a prominent Canadian family. His father,

Georges Vanier, was Canada's 19th Governor General. As a young man, Jean Vanier embarked on a career in the Royal Navy, but in 1950 felt a strong inner calling to do something else with his life. He began to study theology and philosophy, completed his PhD and taught for a number of years at the University of Toronto. Through a friendship with a priest named Fr. Thomas Philippe, he became aware of the plight of thousands of people institutionalized with developmental disabilities.

In a 1996 BBC interview, he recalled how it was incomprehensible to him that someone could appear on this earth but be unwanted. Vanier left academia in 1964 and travelled to France, where he began visiting psychiatric hospitals, which he later described as "warehouses of human misery." In one such place, he befriended two young men named Raphael and Philippe, who, after the death of their parents, had been moved into an institution without their consent.

Vanier decided to invite these two men to make a home with him in the village of Trosly-Breuil, where he bought a simple stone dwelling with no indoor toilets and a wood-burning stove. It was a radical decision, one that he knew was irreversible, but as Vanier explains in his gentle, bemused way, "I knew it was right." The three men worked and cooked and cleaned and ate together, as any family does – and therein lies Vanier's big idea: not to do things "for" people with disabilities, but rather to do things "with" them. He dared to imagine a community

This Issue:

MERCY

Dance 4
Corps Bara Youth Company
Ainsley Sudds

Music 5
Olivier Messiaen:
Music Beyond Time
Carol Hollywood

Living Faith 6
Letting in the Light
Aaron Ellsworth

Faith in Action 7
Calgary Dream Centre:
Focus on Compassion
Laura Locke

Guest Columnist 8
Dr. Gerry Turcotte

Featured Artist 9
Angus McIntyre

Poetry 9
Amanda Achtmann

Book Review 10
The Return of the Prodigal Son
by Henri Nouwen

Film Review 11
G-Dog:
Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job

Once you know

The Spirit of Mercy in Rwanda

"Once You Know..."
The Spirit of Mercy in Rwanda

By Valerie Kae Ken
I have an expression that I use when talking about working in developing countries: "Once you know, you can never not know." This comes out of witnessing first-hand the effects of poverty on those who suffer. I believe it is impossible to return to the comforts and opportunities that we enjoy here in North America

without reflecting on the huge discrepancies that exist in the world today. I often say that we did nothing to earn the high standard of living that we enjoy here...we just got 'lucky.'

Eighteen years ago, my eyes were opened to a whole new world on the African continent, one where there is great poverty and tremendous hardship. But alongside the suffering I have also witnessed great joy, and I marvel at the

resiliency of the human spirit. Moreover, the generosity that I have experienced in Africa will stay with me forever.

In 1980, while studying clothing production at the London College of Fashion in England, I met an Irish nun who had spent most of her life in Uganda. Sr. Mary later contacted me to request my help in setting up a tailoring/clothing construction program for the St. Francis Family Helper Project in Uganda. The challenge of

continued on page 3

L'Arche at Fifty continued



Shula Namak, photo by Billie Mandle

where people of different abilities could come together and live as companions, embracing each other's gifts and imperfections. He chose the name L'Arche, which is French for 'the ark'; to symbolize the boat Noah built for safety and refuge. Vanier's idea is at the centre of L'Arche's new campaign: "Discover With" (www.discoverwith.ca), in celebration of his invitation to Raphael and Philippe, fifty years ago.

Today there are 146 L'Arche communities around the world in 35 countries, in which people with and without intellectual disabilities share life together. One such community is in Calgary. It has five homes in close proximity, with easy access to each other. L'Arche Calgary also supports an Independent Living Program as well as a Day Program with activities such as music and art therapy. Members of L'Arche Calgary see each other often at prayer nights, group dinners and parties, and many volunteers and visitors take part in their programs and events. Garth Reesor is L'Arche Calgary's Executive Director.

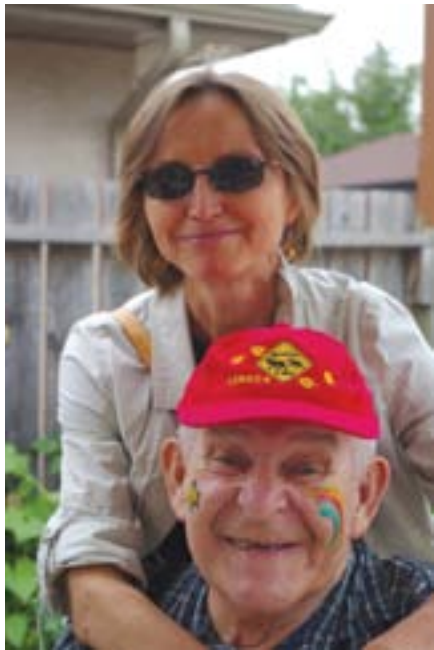
"When people think of L'Arche," says Reesor, "the focus is often on providing a home for people with disabilities. But there is a bigger vision that goes far beyond that. L'Arche is about engaging people in our vision to bring about a more tolerant society. It's about sharing our core values with the larger community around us – values about living together in peace, learning from one other, and acknowledging that every person has something important to offer. It's about personal growth and transformation – which is ultimately what changes the world."

Rachelle Namak is one person whose world was profoundly changed because of L'Arche:

A Place in the Ark By Rachelle Namak

The tale of Noah and the flood terrified me as a child: a vengeful God, an inescapable wrath...and above all, limited space in the Ark. I knew with a bleak certitude that I would not be one of the chosen and I would drown. That fear of drowning has haunted me all of my life. I struggled to learn to swim, to keep my head above water.

When my daughter Shula was born, I sensed immediately and intuitively that she would never be able to swim on her own and that it fell to me to keep the



Ewa & Ed, L'Arche Calgary

flood at bay. Shula was diagnosed with profound autism when she was two-and-a-half years old.

Floods come to us in many forms but there is always loss and loneliness and devastation. For me it was the dire dismissals of medical professionals, the disintegration of family ties, the breakdown of my own health, the desertion of friends... and, above all, the sense of diminishing strength and the ever-threatening waves.

Community is the only refuge and shelter from the storms of life. Some are blessed to find community within family, and others are blessed to find community through bonds of compassion and shared vulnerability.

I first heard the story of Jean Vanier and L'Arche when I was an 18 year-old university student, and it made a deep impression on me. When Shula was thirty years old, I re-discovered the L'Arche community. I never dreamed that she would be able to live there because I thought her autism was too severe. Much to my surprise, she was accepted at L'Arche. It literally saved my life.



Rachelle Namak & Garth Reesor, Run for L'Arche

The L'Arche logo is a tiny craft afloat on a sea, sheltering the most vulnerable of humanity. To the L'Arche community I send this message: There are many of us afloat in a sea of uncertainty and loss. To reach out to the vulnerable and create a place of warmth and security is the greatest work of mercy we can do on this earth.

I give thanks that my daughter has found a place in the Ark.

Rachelle Namak is a former teacher and recently retired Calgary Public Library staff member. For decades, as a single mom, her life was made up of two things: work and Shula. She now volunteers

with a number of organizations, including L'Arche Calgary, and has also taken up running. Last year she ran in three half marathons, one of which was the Rogers Insurance "Run for L'Arche".

For more information about L'Arche Calgary and how you can get involved, visit www.larchecalgary.org



Kolbe Times: Faith, Arts & Justice



Kolbe Times is a Christian media ministry that offers print and online content focused on faith, arts and justice. As a forum to both inspire and challenge, Kolbe Times supplies fuel to connect the Church and the modern world, drawing on the rich history and living culture of our faith.

Kolbe Times was founded in 2010 by a small group of Secular Franciscans committed to living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, celebrating beauty and compassion in a spirit of joy. Our goal is to give voice to the arts and social action as a catalyst for transformation, with a vision of spiritual renewal and unity in the Body of Christ. Our hope is to create a meeting place for artists and social innovators to share their ideas and spur collaborative action.

Maximilian Kolbe (1894-1941) is the patron saint of journalists. A Polish Franciscan priest, he shared his faith and spoke out on behalf of the oppressed through the use of the modern media of his time. He and his fellow Franciscans



St. Maximilian Kolbe

also provided shelter for refugees and Jews in their friary at the beginning of WWII. Fr. Kolbe was later arrested and imprisoned in Auschwitz where, in July 1941, he volunteered to die in the place of another man. Locked in a cell with other condemned prisoners abandoned to die a slow death of starvation, he led the men in song and prayer. Maximilian Kolbe was canonized by Pope John Paul II on October 10, 1982 in the presence of the man whose life was spared due to his sacrifice.

Maximilian Kolbe's faith, courage and use of communications media to promote God's love are the inspiration that shapes Kolbe Times.



Students modeling their creations, Fr. Vjeko Centre

Valerie Kae Ken and students, Fr. Vjeko Centre

Tailoring Program, Fr. Vjeko Centre

creating a program to deliver an employable skill, keeping in mind the specific needs of the target community, was daunting. But I was very excited and eager to design the two-year teaching program, which, I am pleased to report, is operating successfully to this day. Then, a few years later, a Franciscan priest who serves at the Father Vjeko Centre in Kivumu, a very poor rural village in Rwanda, approached me about creating a tailoring program for a trade school that he was developing. The Centre was named after Fr. Vjeko Curic, a much-beloved Franciscan priest who was murdered in Rwanda in 1998.

And so it began. As often as time and money permits, I travel annually to Africa to work at various projects. I am truly blessed to have this opportunity to share knowledge and experience with some of the most wonderful people I have had the privilege to know. In return, I receive so much more – gentle smiles, unwavering loyalty, open hearts and lasting friendships that are the very real treasures I cherish.

The village of Kivumu, about 35 kilometres from the town of Gitarama, Rwanda, now is home to a successful trade school, offering skills training in six disciplines – carpentry, brick building, tailoring, electricity, plumbing and welding. By offering the youth in this very poor area of the country a chance to learn a skill, it also gives them hope for the future. Like so many countries in Africa, Rwanda has two classes of people – the elite well-to-do and the poor majority. The horrific genocide that occurred there just twenty years ago left deep scars that have yet to be healed. In order for true peace and forgiveness to exist, there must be respect for every human life, and it is essential that each person have the right to earn a decent living. This is what we work towards – a time when there will be a large middle class society with a strong economy, which will benefit everyone.

A few years ago, we managed to bring three Rwandan teachers from Kivumu to Olds College in Alberta. They were able to spend three months monitoring classes in Tailoring and Carpentry, in order to improve their teaching skills. And in 2010, I was privileged to be involved, along with a wonderful group of volunteers from the Secular Franciscan community in Olds, in an exciting effort to send a forty-foot sea container to Kivumu. We delivered over ten thousand books, medical equipment, carpentry and tailoring supplies as well as desks, chairs, shelving units and filing cabinets to Padri Vjeko Technical School in Kivumu village.

The Franciscan friars serving this poor community in Rwanda are a living

example of what can be accomplished in the spirit of Christ's love and mercy. Each step builds on one already taken, and an amazing transformation has occurred in this little village in the heart of Africa. There is an overwhelming sense of pride in the community, and optimism shines out from the faces of all the villagers. And now another new school is being built! Kivumu will soon have a 'Technical Secondary School', offering students senior matriculation, as well as a skill-training program.

It can truly be said that God's work is being done in this rural area of Rwanda.

Note: This fall, Valerie Kae Ken travelled again to Rwanda to design a curriculum in

tailoring for the new Senior Secondary School. As well, she plans to design a smaller program for the community of Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and also to run a 'Skills Upgrading Program' for approximately forty tailoring teachers from the various educational institutes in the Southern Province of Rwanda. Valerie is also pursuing her Masters degree in Human Security and Peacebuilding out of Royal Roads University in Victoria, B.C.

For more information about the Father Vjeko Centre in Kivumu, Rwanda, visit www.vjeko-rwanda.info. Donations are most welcome - see details at www.vjeko-rwanda.info/en/donations

Musings from the Editor's Desk

Musings from the Editor's Desk
By Laura Locke
lauralocke@shaw.ca



Laura Locke

I love reading and re-reading the examples of the merciful heart of Jesus in the Gospels, such as the compassion he felt for the crowds who followed Him, "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd", in Matthew 9:36. Or when a rich young man sought out Jesus to find out the secret to eternal life, and proudly, rather naively, declared that he had followed God's commandments since he was a boy. "Jesus looked at him, and loved him," the next sentence tells us in Mark 10: 21. Or when Jesus was moved to tears by the grief of his friend Mary over the death of her brother Lazarus in John 11: 35. Or on his final journey to Jerusalem, in Luke 19: 41-44, when we read how Jesus stood overlooking the city, weeping over the blindness of its inhabitants and the tragedy of lost opportunities to receive God's love.

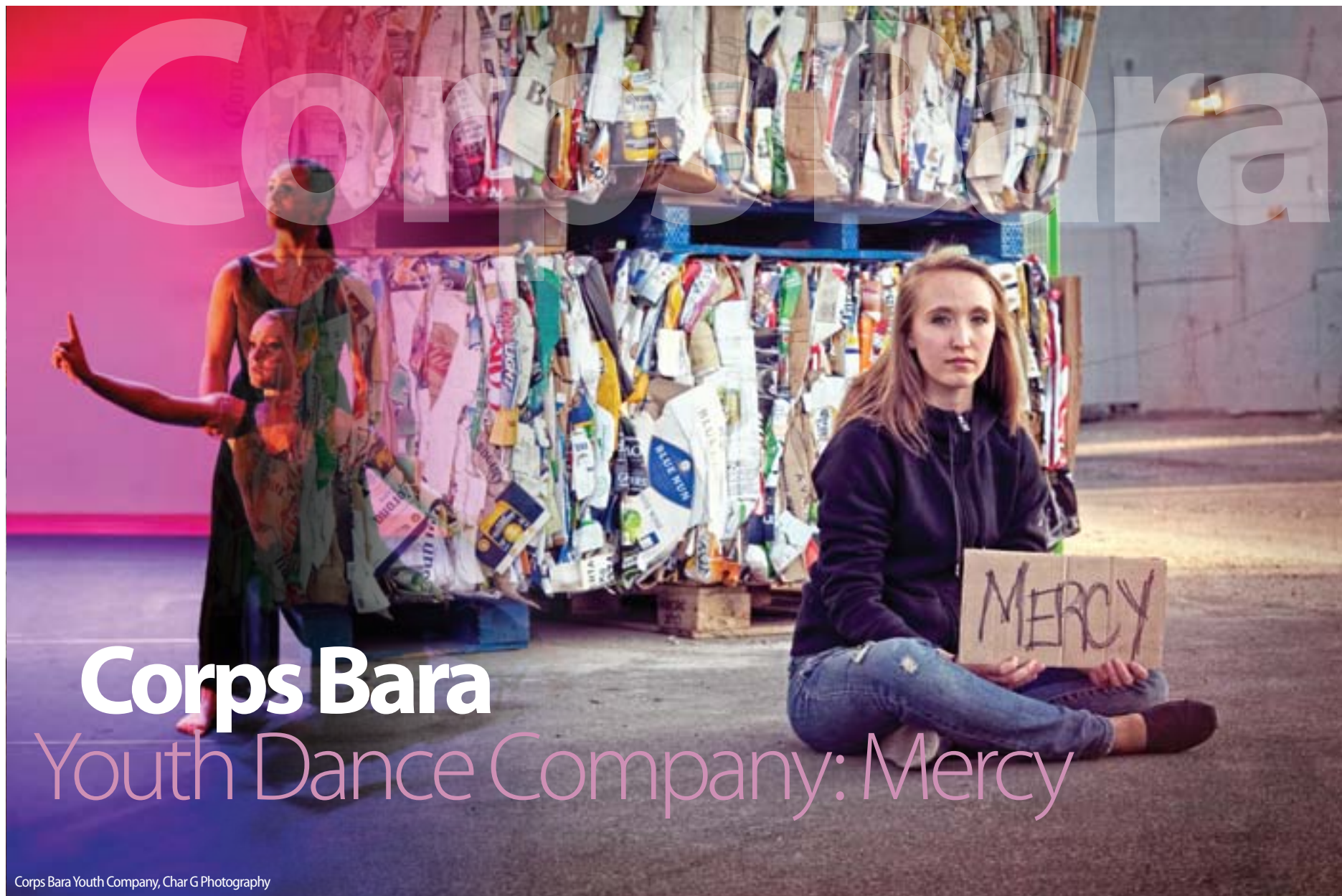
In this issue of Kolbe Times, we are excited to introduce you to a number of ordinary people who are walking on that same courageous path of compassion. Our theme is "Mercy". We start off with the fascinating account of how in 1964 a young man named Jean Vanier made a rather impulsive decision that not only changed his own life, but the lives of countless people around the world. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the organization called L'Arche, which grew out of that decision. You will also discover vivid stories of transformed lives and true community, from bringing hope to a village in Rwanda through education and skills-training, to coming alongside marginalized and homeless men in our own culture. You'll learn about a youth dance troupe that explores the Works of Mercy through creative movement, and the impact of that experience. You'll read about one very remarkable young man's torturous struggle to practice self-mercy. You'll find out how a chance encounter with Rembrandt's painting The Return of the Prodigal Son catapulted Henri Nouwen on a spiritual quest filled with profound personal insights. You'll receive the gift of

Dr. Gerry Turcotte's eloquent meditations on 'tender mercies'. You'll hear about a composer whose best-known work was premiered in a Nazi prison camp, and how his deep-rooted sense of hope and joy were hallmarks of a long and influential career. You'll meet a Graphic Designer with a passion for design... and for helping people spread their message. And you'll encounter a priest who puts violent gang-members to work and shows them what it means to belong to a family.

Author, speaker and Franciscan priest Richard Rohr, in a reflection on mercy, wrote: "We need the salvation of Love to overcome our fear-based disconnection, to return us to intimacy with ourselves, with God, and with others – to return us to wholeness."

This issue is a celebration of the road to wholeness. We're glad you're joining us on the journey.

"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6: 8



Corps Bara

Youth Dance Company: Mercy

Corps Bara Youth Company, Char G Photography



Corps Bara Youth Company, Char G Photography

Corps Bara Youth Dance Company: "Mercy"
By Ainsley Sudds

Corps Bara Dance Theatre is a Calgary based dance company composed of two initiatives, a Project Company of Professional Dancers and a Youth Company of Dancers aged 9-18. Unique in Canada, the youth company is a welcoming environment for young dancers who wish to explore the intersection of dance and Christian spirituality. Corps Bara as a whole is inspired by the power of stories that define and shape culture. Through interplay between movement, spoken word and music, we expand the artistic boundaries of dance and the expectations of the audience. Living into the name "Corps" (Latin for Body) and "Bara" (Hebrew for Create), we craft unique works with a mandate for collaboration with other community groups. Our mission is to be an innovative fusion of contemporary dance theatre that touches the heart and stirs the spirit.

Corps Bara's Youth Company presented "Mercy" March 14-15, 2014 at Mount Royal University's Leacock Theatre. To explore the theme of mercy, the staff and dancers looked to the life of Jesus, who modeled mercy through love, compassion and forgiveness. Today we hear more and more about isolation, intolerance, retaliation and ignorance, while our souls long for meaningful connections. We are challenged to imitate the life of Jesus, which calls us to be merciful to those around us. "Mercy" was created around the



Mercy by Corps Bara Youth Company, Char G Photography

Works of Mercy, which are divided into Corporal (physical) and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Using devotionals centered on the attributes of Christ and the Works of Mercy, our dancers immersed themselves in these themes, and were challenged to extend them into their daily lives and bring examples to share in rehearsal.

The Corporal Works of Mercy
Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty
Clothe the naked
Shelter the homeless
Comfort the imprisoned
Visit the sick; bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy
Advise sinners; be patient with those in error
Instruct the uninformed
Counsel the doubtful
Comfort the sorrowful
Forgive offenses

The choreographers were presented with these ten merciful works and had the



Mercy by Corps Bara Youth Company, Char G Photography

opportunity to create to whichever one spoke to them most. Through these elements, we challenged the audience to look at themselves and see how they might be able to infuse their lives with these works. "Mercy" consisted of 23 dancers and four choreographers from the Calgary area.

Meagan Hampton is a senior dancer with the Corps Bara Youth Company.

"I've grown up in this company," says Hampton, "and one of the most amazing things that I've experienced is how much the simple combination of movement and music can affect both the dancers and the audience. For me, "Mercy" was a show that started as a tangled mess, but when the last thread was pulled tight, became a living thing that acted and moved through us. And through those actions, the lives of the dancers and the audience were permanently impacted."

Corps Bara continues to create and remain active in the Calgary dance and church communities. This upcoming season, Corps Bara's Youth Company will be taking a sabbatical to revision and restructure. Corps Bara's Project Company will be releasing dates and information for their upcoming season this fall 2014.

Stay tuned for another exciting year!

Ainsley Sudds was the Artistic Director for Corps Bara Youth Dance Theatre from 2008 to 2014. As well, Ainsley danced professionally with Corps Bara's Project Company for 10 years. She has received a BA Dance from the University of Calgary; a Certificate of Study from the Limon Institute (NYC); and is beginning an MA of Professional Practice in Dance Technique Pedagogy this fall through Middlesex University in the UK.

For more information about Corps Bara Dance Theatre, visit www.corpsbara.com



Olivier Messiaen, painting by Mr. Chai, Naxos Music Library



Olivier Messiaen: Music Beyond Time
By Carol Hollywood

Though Olivier Messiaen is often considered to be one of the most influential and celebrated composers of the twentieth century, for many people he is someone yet to be discovered. What do we know about Olivier Messiaen? He was a religious man, deeply attached to his Catholic faith. His work was prolific and meticulous throughout a long career, but he wrote almost no music specifically for liturgical settings. He drew inspiration from diverse sources such as Japanese music, birdsong, and Indonesian percussive instruments. He often stated that colour was important to his compositional process – and in fact he perceived colours when he heard certain musical chords, a neurological condition known as synaesthesia. Though hardly a household name, he is decidedly an intriguing figure.

Messiaen's innovative techniques and compositional ideas have been widely studied by academic musicians. His works often pose questions about the relationship between music and spirituality, and his representation of religious subjects, such as the Incarnation, has caused debate and controversy. Messiaen's use of musical

language and rhythm to evoke mysteries that are beyond the dimension of time has left us a body of work that is helpful to spiritual seekers keen to meditate on his theological explorations. These are often reflected in the titles of his compositions, such as *Visions of the Amen*, *Twenty Gazes on the Christ-Child* and *Meditations on the Mystery of the Holy Trinity*. Although his music can be challenging, it offers delight, humour and wonder.

Messiaen was born on December 10, 1908 in Avignon, France, his mother a poet and his father a teacher and Shakespearean scholar. During the First World War he lived with his mother and grandmother in Grenoble where he encountered the landscape and natural setting that were to become great influences on his life and music. Here he taught himself to play the piano and in 1917, at the age of nine, he wrote his first composition. After the war, the reunited family settled in Nantes where he continued to be influenced by the natural world, theatre, literature and, at the root of it all, his Catholic faith. When he was ten years old his harmony teacher introduced him to Claude Debussy's music for the ballet *Pelleas et Mélisande* and this helped set his early musical direction. He went on to study at the Paris Conservatoire from 1919 until 1930 and in 1931, at the age of 22, he was appointed organist of the parish church of Sainte Trinité in Paris. He subsequently held that appointment for over 60 years.

For the first year of World War II, Messiaen served as a medical auxiliary with the French military. He was captured in May 1940 and imprisoned in the Nazi prison camp Stalag VIII-A. Here he composed what is perhaps his best-known work, *Quartet for the End of Time*, first performed by Messiaen and a few fellow prisoners on January 15, 1941 in the prison camp, before an audience of guards and other prisoners. Based on Chapter 10, verses 1 to 6 of The Book of Revelation, it is the first of Messiaen's works to incorporate birdsong and despite the dire situation of the

imprisoned composer and musicians, the work is full of hope.

His last major work was an epic opera, *Saint Francois*, the story of Saint Francis of Assisi, another simple man who loved music and nature. Messiaen said shortly before his death, "Certain people are annoyed that I believe in God but I want people to know that God is present in everything, in the concert hall, in the ocean, on a mountain, even on the Underground."

Alex Ross says in his book *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* that Messiaen led a dull life, as "saints are rarely as interesting as devils". Messiaen seems to have been respectful to all, kind and generous. His students at the Paris Conservatoire, where he taught for over 35 years, described him as an outstanding teacher. He experienced God as both immensely complex and infinitely simple, reachable and everywhere. Messiaen's



sense of joy is especially present in his music pieces that are based on birdsong. As a life-long birdwatcher, Messiaen transcribed birdsong wherever he went. He felt that their songs often recalled the inflections of Gregorian chant, which he believed to be the purest of all music and the only truly fitting accompaniment to the liturgy. He died in Paris on April 27, 1992 at the age of 84.

With seventy published compositions to his name, Messiaen's intrinsic spirituality seems to always underlie his musical language, though not all of his works have explicitly religious themes and symbols. Calgary and area residents will have a rare opportunity to hear Messiaen's grand and joyful *Turangalila-Symphonie* when the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra perform the piece at the Jack Singer Concert Hall on November 29. *Turanga* refers to 'tempo' and *lila* to 'life-force, the game of creation, rhythm and movement', so the concert should be an exuberant experience. This orchestral work features an early electronic instrument called an 'Ondes Martenot'. Originally designed to be similar in sound to the theremin, it was first heard at the Paris Opera in 1928.

Olivier Messiaen was a remarkable and faith-filled man who deserves to be better known and appreciated.

Carol Hollywood is librarian and archivist for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary. For more information about the Diocese Library, phone 403-218-5510 or visit www.rcdc.kohalibrary.com

To watch a video of the composer improvising at Sainte Trinité or teaching a class of music students, visit our website at kolbetimes.com



Carol Hollywood

Enter to Win Two CPO Tickets

In 100 words or less, tell us why you would like to attend the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra's Nov. 29 presentation of *Tour De Force*, featuring Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*. Tickets are valued at \$70 each.

Email your entry by Nov. 20 to lauralocke@shaw.ca.

Contest winner will be notified by email and the tickets delivered to your door!



Aaron Ellsworth, Sulphur Mtn., Banff National Park

Letting in the Light: Cultivating Self-Mercy

Letting in the Light: Cultivating Self-Mercy
By Aaron Ellsworth

It's not easy to describe the depression and anxiety that I suffer from to those who haven't experienced something similar. Imagine every time of sadness, disappointment, worry, and fear that you have felt. Imagine every cruel insult that has come your way and every nasty thought you have had about yourself. Now imagine that this is all you feel, think and hear. All day. All night. Add a loss of interest in anything you once found fun. Add a loss of energy, when taking a shower seems like a climb up Mt. Everest. Add anxiety that takes away your dreams because you believe you can't do anything and you don't deserve dreams anyway. Why go back to school – you're stupid. Why ask a girl out – who could ever love a pathetic lump like you?

In short: it sucks.

Living with this, it is little wonder that my emotions went numb for several years, simply in order to cope. It is also not surprising that the first emotions that came back when I started doing things again – like going to church, getting my high school equivalency, and visiting family – were sadness, fear, worry, and thoughts of self-harm. I was cruel to myself because at the time my voice was largely that of my mental illness. I had to journey through it, hard as it was. I had to struggle, rather than just suffer.

And then one day I felt a little tiny bit of contentment. I didn't even know what it was at first. But once I recognised it, it was unbelievable. I felt okay! It might not seem like much, but 'okay' makes it a lot easier to reach for more positive emotions. 'Okay' gives them room to exist. Yes, it is still very easy for me to return to my negative thoughts and patterns, because they have the power of habit. Even so, today I feel okay (or better) most of the time – though I still struggle.

The community at St. Mary's University in Calgary has helped me greatly with this struggle. Depression and anxiety led me to self-condemnation; St. Mary's helped me to practice self-mercy. Of course, I had been learning skills from other sources, such as therapists, books and people with similar experiences, not to mention the support and encouragement of my family. The things I learned from the professors, staff and my fellow students served to reinforce those positive skills that I had already been working on. It was at St. Mary's that I could finally let in what I had heard many times, maybe because I was finally ready to hear it. I also heard and experienced some things that were new and surprising. Truly, I learned more at St. Mary's than just the curriculum.

At St. Mary's I had so many touching moments, profound moments, and moments of compassion that it is difficult to choose which to share here. I could

write about Dr. Henderson's phrase: "Do the best you can under the circumstances", which now helps me be kinder to myself. I could talk about Dr. Duggan's discussions about mindfulness, being aware of one's own thoughts and feelings in a given moment, and how that fleshed out and beautifully complemented what I had learned in therapy. I could talk about one of my darker days and how Dr. Hopkins took the time to just listen, and then told me to hold on even though it was difficult and it hurt. I could write about how I came to Dr. Hyland-Russell in the midst of an anxiety attack, and she told me in no uncertain terms, "You can do this." I may not be able to tell myself that yet, but I can tell myself that she said I can. Or I could write about Dr. Williams' enthusiasm for literature. I swear every poem and story she teaches is her favourite, and the ideas that grew out of discussions in her class taught me that it is okay to follow your passion. As I went to her class and read the texts, I eventually recognised that I was enjoying myself. That enjoyment was a powerful anti-depressant.

I received another very important gift from my friends and fellow students in my English 401 class. As we worked on our final projects, we had to write short biographies about each other. To this end, we brain-stormed as a group, describing the qualities of each individual. When the focus turned to me, my classmates thanked me for the help I gave them throughout the course and said that I was intelligent, humble, approachable and caring. I almost cried, because the person they described ran so counter to the horrible vision I have of myself. The man they described is the kind of person I would like to be, and amazingly, according to my colleagues, I already am. I have since been using this massive wake-up call to challenge the negative self-image so prevalent in my thoughts. I am endlessly grateful to my classmates for that gift.

The St. Mary's community gave me so much. I can only hope that I gave plenty of myself back. To those struggling or suffering I say this: a mental illness does not define you. Its voice does not have to be your voice. Who you are and who you will become is formed by how you choose to handle your challenges. And be kind to yourself. A baby step forward is still a step forward.

Aaron Ellsworth was diagnosed with depression in his teens, and dropped out of high school. He eventually completed his high school education at Chinook Learning Services, and in June 2014, at age 32, he graduated from St. Mary's University with a Bachelor of Arts in English. He attained a 4.0 average and was top of his class. Aaron is now attending the University of Calgary's graduate program in English.



Aaron Ellsworth with St. Mary's University President Dr. Gerry Turcotte, June 2014. Ellsworth graduated at the top of his class with a perfect 4.0 GPA

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Jim Moore, Executive Director, Calgary Dream Centre

The Calgary Dream Centre: A Focus on Compassion
By Laura Locke

The inspiration behind the Calgary Dream Centre can be summed up in one word – transformation. It's a word that not only refers to the homeless, disenfranchised men who call this place home. Transformation also figures largely in the life story of the Dream Centre's Executive Director, Jim Moore.

Moore was born and raised in Calgary, attending Western Canada High School and later the University of Toronto. His career path began in banking, but his entrepreneurial spirit led Moore to become owner of a number of Dairy Queens in Calgary. He later started his own successful real estate firm, Jim Moore and Associates, and enjoyed a stint as President of the Calgary Real Estate Board.

After Canada Trust offered to buy his company, Moore found himself as Vice-President of the western region for the bank's real estate division, eventually moving with wife Molly to Toronto to become President of Canada Trust Real Estate. But hometown and family ties were strong, and soon Moore was back in Calgary, working as a consultant for the bank.

Then, while attending a conference in Victoria, Moore felt a pain in his chest and was taken to hospital, where he suffered a massive heart attack. A few days later Moore was recovering from triple bypass surgery, with a changed outlook on life.

"Almost everyone has a life-changing experience at some point," says Moore. "Mine happened to be a heart attack."

Shortly after, Moore heard about First Assembly Church's vision for the Dream Centre, a place where homeless men, on the fringes of society, could find community. As well, they would be receiving life management skills, career development training and spiritual care, restoring their dignity and equipping them to become productive citizens. The idea struck a chord with Moore.

"I've always loved building things, putting things together," says Moore, "and pouring my energy into people, as well. And I know from my own experience you can't get to where you want to be without help."

Friends and family counselled Moore to slow down after his heart surgery, but as Moore recounts, "retire is not a word in my vocabulary." He was asked to help put the real estate deal together that brought the Dream Centre into being. A thirty year old hotel on Macleod Trail was acquired, and work began in earnest.

"We basically gutted the building," says Moore. "It had two strip joints and five bars. The police were always raiding it. You wouldn't believe how many hypodermic needles we found in there."

After three years of planning and hard work by countless volunteers, the Dream Centre was dedicated on Oct. 18, 2003. It wasn't long before Moore became its Executive Director.

"Sometimes people ask what a businessman like me is doing here," says Moore with a grin. "When I was a 'suit', I would look at homeless people and think they were lazy. Now that I've sat down with hundreds of these guys and heard their stories, I understand that many of them have come across such despair in their life, and turn to drugs or alcohol or gambling to take the pain away. They come here and we love them and care for them and protect them. We make sure this place is safe for them, with zero tolerance for violence, alcohol or drugs. Our expectations for the men are to clean up on the inside, clean up on the outside, reunite with their families, change their way of thinking and write a new book for themselves. And it's working."

There are 300 men going through Calgary Dream Centre's specially designed programs at any one time, which includes an Addiction Recovery Program, Transitional Housing and Long-Term Supportive Housing. Almost 5000 men have been through the Dream Centre's specialized support process. A new Dream Centre initiative this year, in partnership with The Calgary Foundation, focuses on young men aged 18 to 24.



Christopher Coyne, Calgary Dream Centre

Christopher Coyne is one of the Dream Centre's innumerable success stories. He spent many years, as he puts it, "addicted to cocaine, homeless and broken". Finally at the point of total frustration with the way his life was going, Coyne joined a group of men going through the Dream Centre's programs.

"The Dream Centre picked me up when I was down, helped me to believe in myself, and gave me the necessary tools to deal with life on life's terms," says Coyne. "Since graduating from the program, I have been able to reconnect with my family, and was blessed to see my Mom again after 10 years." Coyne is now a Case Manager at the

Dream Centre, serving men who are in the same place that he was a short time ago.

Moore insists he couldn't do anything without the strong team he has built around him. He is proud that the Dream Centre has become self-sustaining, receiving support from all three levels of government. Calgary's entire faith community has rallied around them, along with many other donors, volunteers and stakeholders.

"We're involved with many community action groups working on ending homelessness," says Moore. "No one has all the answers, but when people with the same passion work together towards a

goal, things happen. Homelessness is going to be eradicated in Calgary. How? By showing compassion, one life at a time."

For more information about the Calgary Dream Centre or to find out how you can get involved, visit their website at www.calgarydreamcentre.com or phone 403-243-5598.

To see inspiring videos about transformed lives through the work of the Calgary Dream Centre, visit www.kolbetimes.com

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Changing Hearts and Minds through Tender Mercies

Changing Hearts and Minds through
Tender Mercies
By Dr. Gerry Turcotte

The Lord is good to all: and his tender
mercies are over all his works.
Psalm 145: 9

The subject of mercy should concern us all. There can hardly be any who do not need it — there are surely none who cannot use it. Mercy is the denominator of Christ. In an early homily, Pope Francis argued that “Mercy is the Lord’s most powerful message,” and he called on the Church to exert this as a daily necessity. But as always with this humble realist, Pope Francis acknowledged the difficulty mercy poses for all of us — both in remembering to dispense it in our daily lives, but also in being open to receiving it from God. “It is not easy to trust oneself to the mercy of God, because [God’s mercy] is an unfathomable abyss — but we must do it.”

The Latin word for mercy is *Misericórdia*, from the roots *miser* meaning wretched, and *cordis* meaning heart. It is also the

name of a dagger used in the Middle Ages to deliver the final death stroke to a dying adversary. As an altar boy I thought the word was ‘miserable cord’. I imagined the hunchback of Notre Dame pulling on his miserable cord to ring the joyless bells. My friend said I was crazy; that in fact the word was ‘miserable *chorus*’. Yet when the extraordinary strains of Mozart’s *Misericórdia Domini* broke out we knew we were both wrong.

Mercy, of course, is central to Christian thought and practice, and it is also a lynchpin of Pope Francis’s call to arms — his reminder to all, from the highest to the humblest station — that we must reach out to those in need with compassion and mercy. In our contemporary world we often only imagine mercy as the subject of dramatic films, the penultimate scene in a movie where someone is spared a savage fate. And given recent headlines and violence in the Middle East, mercy, in that context, seems in short supply. And yet there are also those, like Albertans Amanda Lindhout and Reverend Dale Lang, who speak passionately of forgiveness and

concern. Lindhout forgave her captors in Somalia despite the horrific treatment that was meted out to her; Rev. Lang forgave his young son’s teenage killer in a high school shooting.

While these are examples of overwhelming and humbling compassion, it is equally important that we deliver mercy in more modest contexts: in how we negotiate with others, especially those of differing views, and in how we forgive perceived injustices against us. Most importantly, as Pope Francis has insisted, it is also critical that we “do good to those who are unable to reciprocate.” When he speaks of the role of Mother Church, he speaks of a teacher nurturing good in others. As a teacher, and as president of St. Mary’s University in Calgary, this metaphor resonates strongly for me. “A good teacher,” Pope Francis says, “does not get lost in the details, but points to what is essential so that the child or student can find meaning and joy in life.” To do this we must emulate Christ. “Jesus teaches by example, and uses words to illuminate the meaning.”

Such is the mission of a university — to help our students bring meaning to their lives, but also to instill in them a passion to bring grace to others. As Pope Francis puts it, mercy “overcomes every obstacle, knocks down every wall and brings you to always seek the face of . . . the person. And it is mercy that changes hearts and lives; that can regenerate a person and allow them to reintegrate themselves in society.”

Dr. Gerry Turcotte is the President of St. Mary’s University in Calgary, Alberta.

*He is also the author or editor of 15 books, including the novel *Flying in Silence*, shortlisted for *The Age Book of the Year* in Australia.*



Dr Gerry Turcotte



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9

Featured Artist

Faith, Arts & Justice



The challenge of creating a logo that meets his own high standards is what feeds McIntyre's creative spirit.

In every issue of Kolbe Times, we like to highlight the work of an artist we admire. This fall, we realized that we didn't have far to look for someone who is passionate about creativity – our own graphic designer, Angus McIntyre.

McIntyre was born and raised in Calgary, and graduated from the Alberta College of Art and Design in 1988 majoring in Visual Communications. It was a time before computers, and as McIntyre puts it, "everything was done by hand, so we learned how to draw, old school."

After graduation, he honed his craft working for a variety of ad agencies in Calgary and Ontario, before heading off to Nassau in the Bahamas where he lived for almost eight years. There, he did design work for Etienne Dupuch Publications, a major publishing house that produces a number of magazines, books and guides for visitors.

Now living and working in Cayley, McIntyre loves nothing better than helping his wide range of clients become distinctive and eye-catching. He believes good design is relevant, versatile and iconic, getting an instant reaction without a confusing message. The challenge of creating a logo that meets his own high standards is what feeds McIntyre's creative spirit.

McIntyre has also branched out into web design and development for a number of big clients, but also enjoys coming alongside smaller companies, entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations and artists, helping them design and

maintain their own websites using popular platforms like Word Press. He then hosts their site and helps with content management. McIntyre has become adept at helping his clients set up unique online store fronts, where customers can buy products, tickets and software items online.

McIntyre is making a name for himself with his clean, simple and beautiful design work. When you talk to McIntyre, it's instantly obvious that he loves what he does, and he also loves the variety of ways he gets to use his creativity, versatility and problem-solving skills every day. But he also has a practical side. "The proof is in the pudding," says McIntyre. "Results are what counts. ...it's not how you start, but how you finish."



For more information on McIntyre Communications or to find out how you and your business can stand out from the crowd, visit his website at www.mcintyrecommunications.ca or phone 403-668-4552.



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Poetry

The Rich and Poor Have This in Common
By Amanda Achtman

*All these signs of contradiction in my midst
The modern lepers who I refuse to kiss
I cannot deny the mystery that they are blessed
The poorest, wholly set apart from all the rest
Foolishness to the world and to me
Their suffering from which I turn so easily
But it isn't righteousness I feel
But rather, as I turn the corner, the longing just to kneel
Who is my neighbour? I only start to grasp
When my two folded hands are firmly clasped
In prayer I come dependent before the throne
Naked, or in rags I do not own
Pleading mercy unworthily, like a beggar in the street
Broken and hungry, needing anything to eat
Love takes me in and Mercy shows me grace
As I barely look my own strangers in the face
The double standard between Holy Love and ours
Is the difference between a bystander
And a giving victim bearing scars.*



Amanda Achtman

Amanda Achtman graduated recently from the University of Calgary with a degree in Political Science. She now lives in Toronto.

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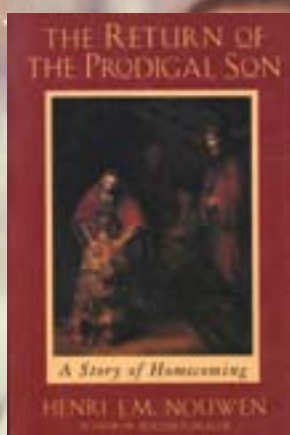
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The Return of the Prodigal Son A Story of Homecoming



Henri Nouwen and Jean Vanier, 1987. American Theological Library Association

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming
By Laura Locke

With the theme of "Mercy" for this issue of Kolbe Times, it seemed the perfect chance for me to read and review *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* by Henri Nouwen. I've long been a fan of Nouwen's books, but somehow this one never made it to my bedside table. Based on Jesus' powerful parable of a wayward younger son returning home to face his father and older brother found in Luke 15: 11-32, this book is a captivating exploration of forgiveness and restoration.

Henri Nouwen was a Dutch-born priest who studied psychology and theology, and then went on to teach at various universities and theological institutes, including Notre Dame, Yale and Harvard. Nouwen was the author of over forty books, and he often wrote in a disarmingly intimate style, exploring our human need for meaning and intimacy. Nouwen suffered from bouts of depression, and he wasn't afraid to write about his struggles and his very personal spiritual insights, which is precisely what makes his books so potent and helpful. In an interesting tie to our cover story about the fiftieth anniversary of L'Arche, Nouwen spent his last ten years living and serving at L'Arche Daybreak Community near Toronto, before his sudden death of a heart attack in 1996.

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming was first published in 1992, but the story told in the book begins ten years earlier. After an exhausting lecture tour across the U.S., Nouwen decided to visit the L'Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, France for a time of rest and to visit his new friend Jean Vanier. While there, he happened to see a poster of the famous painting by Rembrandt entitled *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Nouwen writes that his heart leapt when he saw it. He recalls, "The tender embrace of father and son expressed everything I desired at that moment."

And so began a sometimes painful but very fruitful spiritual adventure, which Nouwen shares with us in this beautifully written book. After seeing the poster, he embarked on an in-depth exploration of the themes in the parable, Rembrandt's life, the painting itself, and his own self-image. Nouwen not only read all the biographies of Rembrandt and historical studies of the painting that he

could find, he also travelled to the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia to see the original painting. As is the case with many of his books, Nouwen openly shares the very personal revelations that arose out of his research and meditations. He begins the book by drawing comparisons between the younger son in the parable who flees from his loving home, and his own life:

"Over and over again I have left home. I have fled the hands of blessing and run off to faraway places searching for love. This is the great tragedy of my life, and of the lives of so many I meet on my journey."

Nouwen later starts to wonder if perhaps he is also much like the elder brother in the parable, and this opens a whole new avenue of exploration and self-reflection. Nouwen does a brilliant analysis of how deeply rooted the "lostness" of the elder brother is, and how hard it is to return home from there. He writes:

"At the very moment I want to speak or act out of my most generous self, I get caught in anger or jealousy. And it seems that just as I want to be most selfless, I find myself obsessed about being loved. Wherever my virtuous self is, there also is the resentful complainer. I am faced with my own true poverty. Can the elder son in me come home?"

In the last third of the book, Nouwen focuses on the father in this parable. He marvels at God's eagerness to "run to welcome his returning son and fill the heavens with sounds of divine joy." Nouwen has a surprising and life-changing revelation – that perhaps he is being called to become the father: "I now see that the hands that forgive, console, heal and offer a festive meal must become my own."

Nouwen does a marvelous job of deconstructing elements of the painting itself – the placement of the characters, the lighting, the symbolism of the clothing, the representation of the father's hands, the subtle use of colour, the facial expressions. It's both fascinating and very enriching to get lost with Nouwen in these aspects of the painting, to examine their significance, and to speculate on what Rembrandt might have been trying to convey.

Through his clear and engaging writing style, Nouwen gently enticed me down a path of my own self-reflection. What is Jesus

saying to me through this parable? Am I most like the younger son or the older brother? Are there some situations in my life where my hands could become more like the father's hands? *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming* is a both an inspiration and a guide, lighting the

way towards a deeper understanding of ourselves, and of our merciful God's longing to be fully reconciled with each of us.

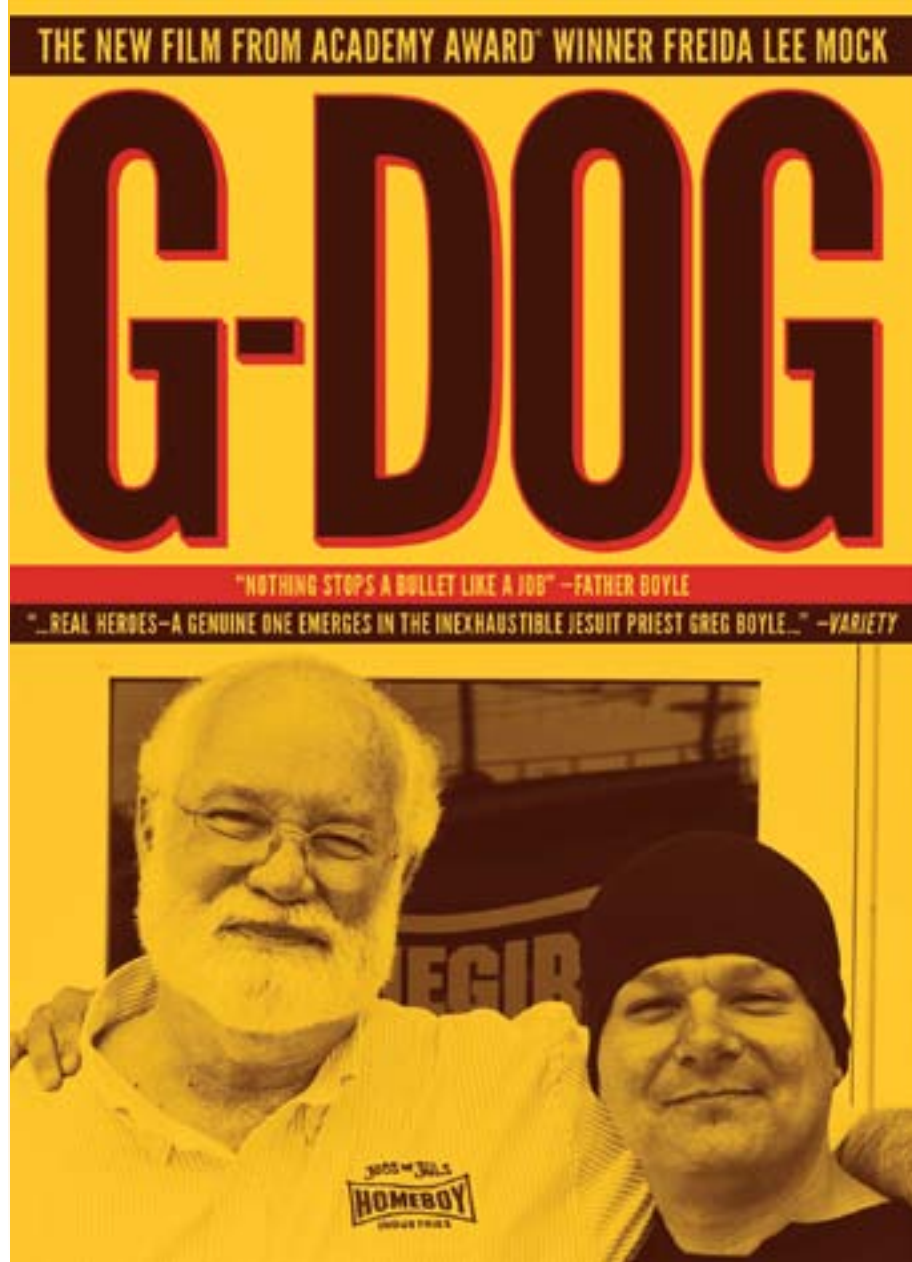
Laura Locke is Editor of Kolbe Times.

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“You can tell that for many of them, Fr. Greg is the father they never knew. We hear their pain, and we see their joy.”



Fr Greg Boyle, Homeboy Industries

G-Dog: Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job
Film Review by Bill Locke

A tough-looking young man looks directly into the camera and says with a crooked grin, “G-Dog is cool, he’s a homeboy, a homey, one of our own.” Who would guess that the canine in question is Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest?

G-Dog is a touching, fly-on-the-wall documentary about a year in the life of Homeboy Industries, a social enterprise created by Fr. Greg, a.k.a. G-Dog. Directed by Academy Award winning filmmaker Freida Lee Mock, this is the story of a visionary who launched the most successful gang intervention program in America. It’s not without irony or sadness, as we come to see – because it’s also a story of survival.

The documentary takes us right into the day-to-day life of Homeboy Industries. We are privy to uncomfortable details about disappointment and frustration and failure, but we also are shown an intimate view of the people dedicated to this hardest of missions.

There’s a lot of buzz nowadays about social enterprise, and Homeboy Industries is a shining example. Former gang-involved men and women make meals in the industrial kitchen, serve food in the café, look after children in the daycare, and design silkscreen t-shirts in a back room. But not many social enterprises have the soulfulness that Fr. Greg inspires. It’s a home, where kids who feel abandoned and hopeless, who have no one but fellow gang members to hang out with, find a place where they are accepted, loved and given a second chance at life.

The subjects do not seem to be aware of the cameras hovering over and around them. Too often, a video about a mission organization is like a one-hour commercial where everything is staged. Not this time. That said, Fr. Greg seems to be always calm and on his game, speaking from his heart as he manages extremely difficult situations and people. In fact, he seems to thrive on crisis – and in the last half of the film Homeboy Industries is facing a huge crisis that could destroy it. That’s when the film soars. We have a sense that no one, not even the filmmakers, know what is coming around the corner. But we also get the sense that the Holy Spirit is kicking into gear.

For me, the most beautiful aspects of the film are the intimate portraits of gang members who have come under the wing of Homeboy Industries and Fr. Greg. These are young men and women whom the police, social workers and judges have given up on. You can tell that for many of them, Fr. Greg is the father they never knew. We hear their pain, and we see their joy.

How did Greg Boyle, who grew up in a white, middle-class suburban family, come to be here? After he became interested in religious life, went to

seminary and joined the Jesuits, he worked in the slums of Bolivia and met the poor for the first time. His calling to live with the underprivileged became clearer in the 1970s when he moved back to Los Angeles.

Fr. Greg became a priest in one of the most dangerous Catholic parishes in the U. S., where the police told him to stay indoors if he wanted to stay alive. Violent gangs were a common feature of the neighbourhood, with police helicopters surveying the streets every night of the week. Gang membership here began as early as age 12, with rival gang members barely out of elementary school killing each other.

Instead of giving up or fighting back, Fr. Greg took the third way, a positive alternative, trying to address the root causes of poverty and alienation. Fr. Greg organized his parishioners and together they appealed to local employers to hire these troubled kids in their neighborhood. They created jobs painting over graffiti and cleaning up garbage. They made sure the kids stayed in school. Many people thought this idealistic young man with a Roman collar was a renegade, but before long crime rates in the neighbourhood started to come down and Fr. Greg turned his opponents into fans.

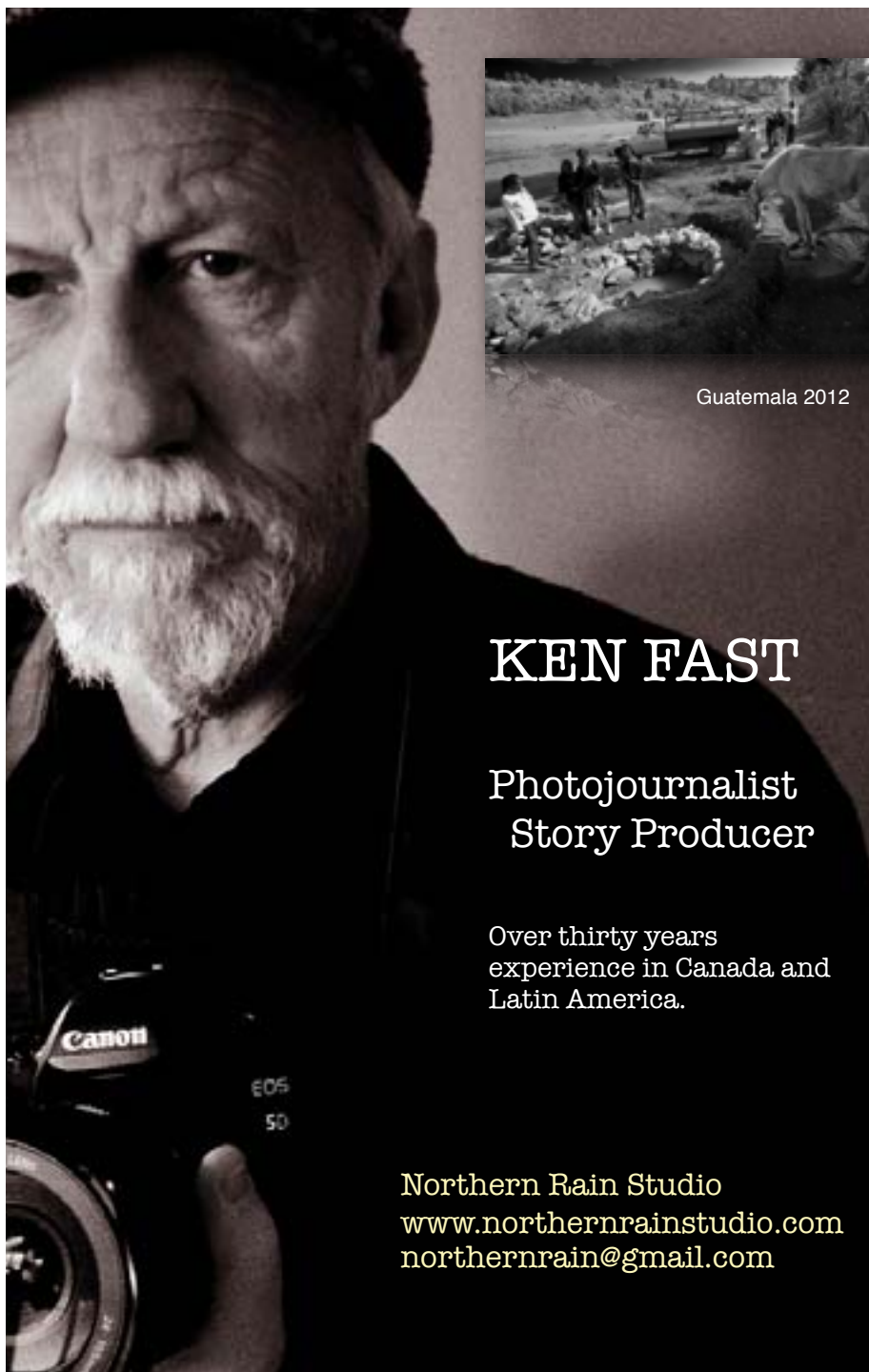
G-Dog is a challenge to followers of G-sus. We all know there are poor, disenfranchised and dangerous people in our cities. But so rarely do we follow the challenging highway of mercy that G-Dog travels. The film asks all of us if there is a dark place where we have been called to shed light, to create family.

To quote Fr. Greg, the measure of your compassion is not your service to those on the margins, but your willingness to see yourself in kinship alongside them.



Bill Locke

Bill Locke is a recovering documentary filmmaker. He is President of Capacity Builders Inc., a consulting company serving community organizations, and is co-author of “The Nurturing Leader”.

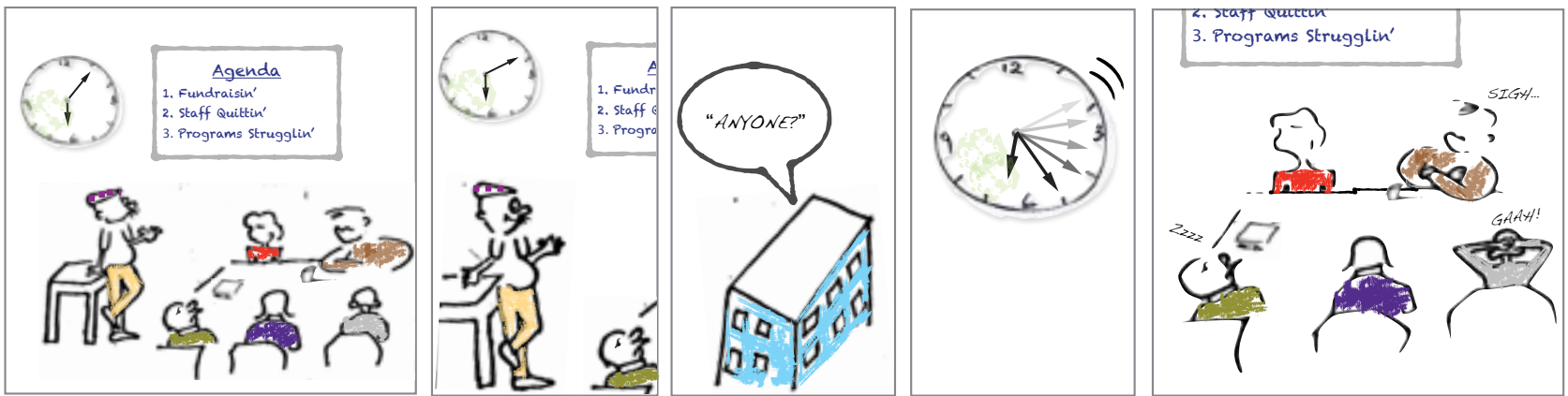


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