

# The Chicago Seminary News

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

FALL SEMESTER 2007

## *Dear Readers and Friends of the Seminary!*

This fall began our fifth year with students at the seminary in Chicago, and as if to match this number, five students arrived from five different countries and three continents. Yes, the seminary is international. This is a group of older students, who for now had to leave much behind, professions, children, wives, familiar ways of living, countries, language, ready to take the step into the unknown, 'feeling only the wind in their faces'.

In our weekly lesson of the World as Parable, as preparation for sermons or the discovery of our ability to make the world we see transparent, Falling Leaves was our theme one week in October. What is it like to be stripped down to the essentials, to be exposed, to be crumbled to dust, to set the world ablaze with color, to become free of weight, and not to fall but to dance to the tune of gravity, to be ripped off by stormy winds or to let go gently and fall silently, to discover at the place vacated by the fallen leaf not a scar but the new bud? Such is the world of autumn, of saying goodbye to what has become and to be open to new sights and insights, as we see again, thanks to the fallen leaves, so much more sky. It is a beautiful time to set out on a path. You will see from the students' contributions, that they are familiar with the autumn mood.

But before the leaves were falling in Chicago, sunflowers greeted our new students in the seminary garden. One of last year's students planted them for their arrival and invited by their sunny faces, the students added their own. (see below).

Dear friends of the Seminary, we hear frequently how much the seminary newsletter is appreciated. Please consider the printing and mailing costs. No amount is too small. Any amount helps to alleviate scholarship needs, and helps cover our operating expenses. We appreciate your consideration and thank you for all the gifts received since the seminary opened its door. Many friends and members have already taken advantage of our weeklong Open Courses. Some have even returned for another course and yet another dose of seminary life.

With warm regards, Richard Dancey and Gisela Wielki, seminary directors



Fall Semester 2007. From left to right: Domenica Nieddu (Italy), Gaia Louman (Netherlands), David Scott (USA), Karin Eppelsheimer (Germany) and Fernando Chevallier Boutell (Argentina).

**DONATIONS ARE WELCOME.** Please make check payable to the Seminary of the Christian Community, and mail to: P.O. Box 25603, Chicago, IL 60625.

## *My way to the Seminary*

By Karin Eppelsheimer

When my decision to come here to the Seminary became clear, of course, sooner or later I had to tell people about it. The reactions were very different, but one question came again and again: why go to America? After all, there are two seminaries in Germany. The questions were justified. My English isn't very good, nor did I have a particular relationship to America, and so I was at a loss for an answer. But there was never any doubt that it could only be Chicago. Happy to escape further questions, I arrived at the Seminary. But the questions must have hidden themselves in my luggage, because no sooner had I unpacked than the first person asked: why America? After all, there are two seminaries in Germany... and as she so stood, the star child had not one single thing left ... 'This was my feeling as I arrived here in Chicago. What did I leave behind? First, there were my eighteen years of work as a kindergarten teacher, most recently at the Rudolf Steiner School in Kreuzlingen/Switzerland, and with it the whole school community, my musical work with the little children there and in the Christian Community Konstanz/Kreuzlingen. There was the beautiful landscape of Lake Constance with its near Alps and last but not least, I was bartering my language for an almost incomprehensible way of speaking. What or who was I now, what had I taken with me on this big journey? But it didn't take long '... and suddenly some stars from heaven fell down ...'

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## *Who am I?*

By Fernando Chevallier Boutell

Hola ¿Como estan?

Where are you from? What is your name? What are you doing? Who are you really? What are you doing in this world? All are simple questions and the answers can be very different at different biographical moments as shown in Oedipus's answer to the riddle of the sphinx. The human being is truly a mystery but it can be approached and entered. My name is Fernando, and for many years I have worked as a psychotherapist. To continue to understand that mystery is for me a spiritual question. I arrived then at the Seminary...and I miss my two children and my wife, but I am happy.

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## *To Build Castles and Temples*

By Gaia Louman

My name is Gaia Louman. Born in the Netherlands in 1970, I am a student of life. My work consists of making photographs and working with the awareness for what wants to happen, the present moment.

The temple inspires me much. By the action of building one's temple, one is brought closer to the true significance of one's being and of knowing oneself. So building literally a temple can reveal one's inside deeply and touch the consciousness of everything that is already there. In my life, I have met people that have built their temples just like Rudolf Steiner built the first Goetheanum.

Once I lived in a castle named Theyrargues, which means earth of God. The owner was building all day a recreation (in miniature) of the Mount Sinai and transformed the castle into a sacred space. Now in Chicago I have just met nearby the venerable Zen master Sunim, who has built with his very own hands the temple where I became a resident.

Stone by stone one builds a temple. The reality of the effort and the value that something gets when it has passed through all layers of consciousness opens my heart.

The Act of Consecration opens a space in which the present moment is invited just as in a meditation or baptism by fire. It can be the eternal touch in one's being, just as the flame is. The consciousness of a community thereby is important and so is our individualism too. True presence is a secret white stone in the palm of your hand ready to be placed in the temple of your soul, in the square of the sacred space of the New Jerusalem, that we all take part in, in timeless existence. The divine call remains a very personal experience.

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## *A Path to the Beginning*

By David Scott

Autumn is a time of falling and receding. All living things begin to draw inward searching for their own inner grace. As we look outwards to the incoming winter rolling towards us we can once again use this beautiful season to find our way toward our own inner light. As I swish through the fallen leaves that have tumbled down among my feet, sometimes I think of them as a representation of the fall of man, swirling downward toward the path of individuality and true freedom to finally land on the divine ground of the world.

We can also think of those that are around us and their own inner journey, their own inner search. Like the trains in Chicago, people take different routes - the red, yellow, blue or green lines. In their endeavors to drive toward their destination or individual destinies (if you like) all of us start in grammar school; some getting there either by straight line or curve. But, either way, we all must first fall to the ground like autumn leaves.

Far away, in California, are my wife and three daughters, calling me with tales of their lives that are in a different gear. Right now, like me, living in their own rhythm. They laugh and smile, and fight and make up, driving to work and to school and back. I go from class to class, walk to the market, and read about the depth of life along the path with the spiritual world. The days are moving forward, one cascading into another, two destinies running in parallel waiting to intersect into one life.

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## *From the World to the Word*

By Domenica Nieddu

*“... Non vogliate negar l’esperienza  
di retro al sol, del mondo senza gente.  
Considerate la vostra semenza  
fatti non foste a viver come bruti  
ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza”*

- Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia, Inferno - Canto XXVI, 116-120*

Screech...Whoosh...Bang...Ooohhh...Slash...

These are not the kind of sounds I had expected to hear in a reputable religious establishment!

Chicago is quite a lively city and Sunnyside Avenue seems to be as busy as the temple where Jesus scolded the money changers.

I sit in the classroom at my all-in-one-desk-chair (a narrowing, finite experience for the physical, astral, and etheric body) and hear the life of the world: Sirens, construction workers’ drills, lawn mowers, cars’ squeaking brakes, airplanes flying low, children playing basketball, babies crying inconsolably, bicycle hand bells, choppers, buses, people yelling at each other, you name it...

Sometimes it is hard to hear the lecturer: And so the Divine Trinity... United Airways flight 98 off to Los Angeles; the Gospel of St. John... Tommy does not want to wear his hat; the pure intuitive thinking of the Philosophy of Spiritual Activity... Shoot! That dog pooped on my lawn!

Come on! I came here all the way from Italy to pursue "virtute e conoscenza"? What is this?

I had pictured a rarefied holy environment where everybody moves in beautiful gestures and wears Birkenstock shoes. Instead, I find myself immersed in the Chicago I had seen in the movies (noise, gangsters, police chases).

All in all, I am pleasantly surprised and appreciate the opportunity to absorb fully the World, while relishing the Word. After all, at the beginning were the words and the sounds, not only the ones of the teaching priests, but also the ones of vibrant Chicago.

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### *Footnote:*

Notes of Dry Leaves

By R.J. Jimenez

Two dry leaves coming down through the light, fall, chasing each other in waves of love, chirping like two birds.

Upon a field made boundless by light, a fallen dry leaf takes from the sliding sun the silvery splendor of a wavy, peaceful sea.

FALL SEMESTER 2007

September 17-21

Introduction into the Foundations of a Religious Life

Rev. Richard Dancey, Chicago

September 24-29

Living with the Act of Consecration of Man

Rev. Gisela Wielki, Chicago

October 1-5

The Gospel of John

Rev. Daniel Hafner, Chicago

October 8-12

The Transition from the Old to the New Testament

Rev. Oliver Steinrueck, San Francisco

October 15-19

Painting

Laura Summer, Harlemville, NY

October 22-26

Christology

Rev. Erk Ludwig, New York

October 29-Nov. 2

"Money makes the World go round"

Money rules. Can it serve?

Rev. Hans-Bernd Neumann, Germany

November 5-9

Altar Picture - The Threshold of our Perception.

Rev. Norbert Schaaf, Germany

November 12-16

"Perspectives on Life; Biographical Phases"

Dorit Winter, Director of the Bay Area Waldorf Teacher Training

November 19-21, Thanksgiving week

Christ and the Earth

Rev. Daniel Hafner, Chicago

November 26-30

The Riddles of Philosophy, from the Pre-Socratics to Plato

Rev. Julia Polter, Boston

December 3-7

The Seven Sacraments

Rev. Gisela Wielki, Chicago

December 10-14

Advent & Christmas Themes

Rev. Richard Dancey, Chicago

I-A-O - RIGHT VOWELS FOR CHICAGO?

By Karin Eppelsheimer

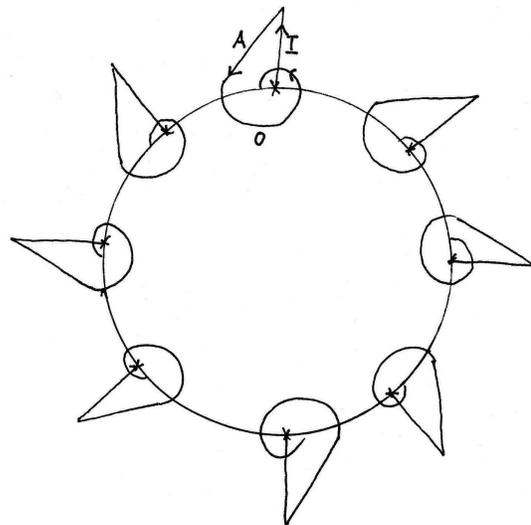
We often hear in class that life, the world is all about polarities. Our challenge is to find a balance.

Now, there is one class where we not only can, but have to do this. And that is the Eurythmy class.

In the simple exercise "I-A-O", we can practice this tremendous task in its purist form and mysteriously so in Chicago. The whole lesson is actually rich in opportunities to become aware of it ever again.

Susanne Zipperlen, the Eurythmy teacher, has the wonderful ability to create the mood and space in which it can happen.

And so we can exercise and Eurythmy can be a healthy element in our seminary life and mysteriously in Chicago.



Frusciano le foglie al vento  
Scivolano crescendo  
La bufera sgronda  
Ed ogni goccia cade sulla fronda  
Tremano le foglie al vento  
E svaniscono morendo  
Serena la terra accoglie  
Sia la pioggia che le foglie  
- Fernando Chevallier Boutell

# Marking My Own Becoming ...

By Jonah Evans



Jonah Evans and Sarah at the Raphael House an anthroposophical care center and school for severely disabled children and young adults in Stuttgart, Germany.

Church bells ring here. At every hour, their sound slowly rolls over the forested hills of southern Germany, and one knows here that time moves with music. Church bells have a distinctive ring. They sing of the abbots and tradition. They speak of the deep history of Christendom. The bells make the passage of time that much more beautiful.

Not everything here for me is difficult. I love the bells. I find walking in Stuttgart very gratifying especially when I can kick a chestnut a few times in between steps. The Statue in Eugenplatz looks like my wife and is therefore stunning. I also love playing music for Sarah, my friend who lives at the Raphael House, where I first worked with my rudimentary German. I find bretzels with butter very satisfying. Sometimes I have one before my German course intensive at lunchtime because by the time I finish the course at 6 I am starving and need it to tied me over. However, the mineral baths are the best. Wonderful soothing water and the healing heat of the sauna is just what a guy needs after six days of studying 12 hours a day. Its called Das Leuze. Just ask anyone here and they'll know. But be prepared you Americans, 'cause everyone goes in the buff.

I can't really explain how things look here. I don't really know why either. I tried to one time for my dad but it didn't work. Things look like middle Europe here. If you have been here then you know.

They look German. Lots of stone, strong and clear. There is a place for everything. My place is in the seminary. It has been so for four weeks now.

Every part of these past three months has been a dying process for me. I don't say that lightly or so that you will feel sympathy or pity or something evocative. I really mean it.

I say it so you can catch a glimpse of a California boy who has died to just about everything that is familiar or provides comfort for him. This dying process means that the self that I once new, the personality that lived in the English language, has virtually disappeared from my experience.

When you leave your language your personality that lived in that language, stays with that language. So I have dived into a new language, a new world, and that means that I have chosen to die to myself as I have known it to be and now must create a new personality- one that lives in the German language. And every time I understand anew or am understood in a new way, it is like the church bells that ring every hour. Only these bells are marking my own becoming.

Eine wunderbare Eigenschaft lernte ich hier in Chicago kennen:

Wenn im Herbst die Blaetter von den Baeumen fallen, werden sie nicht - wie bei uns in Deutschland - sofort von den Entsorgungsmaschinen` beseitigt, sondern sie duerfen die Wiesen, Strassen und die Wege schmuecken mit ihren herrlichen Farben und Formen. Sie duerfen tanzen und wirbeln und uns in ihren herbstlichen Abschiedsreigen mitnehmen. Wenn sie schliesslich alle Farben verschenkt haben, bleibt ihnen noch ihr trockenenes, raschelndes Sein. Und was gibt es Schoeneres , als durch einen Laubhaufen zu stapfen, begeistert von der Ueberfuelle dieser schier schwerelosen Materie.

Karin Eppelsheimer

In de lichte roos, tussen de takken van de boom, ligt een tuin die ooit tot de geheimen terugging en zichzelf verborg, diep in de aarde. Nu echter is de stilte gekomen en heeft zich de wildernis tot stem gekozen.

Niets zal ooit meer hetzelfde zijn.

Gaia Louman

## *Becoming Golden*

By Nora Minassian

Before letting go of their tree, and uniting themselves with the earth, the leaves in this autumn season go through an enormous transformation. They take into themselves the light of the sun and express this light in wonderful shades of red, orange and yellow. As the light of the sun falls on them, the leaves shimmer and become golden. Then, they fall down and offer themselves in their golden state to the earth.

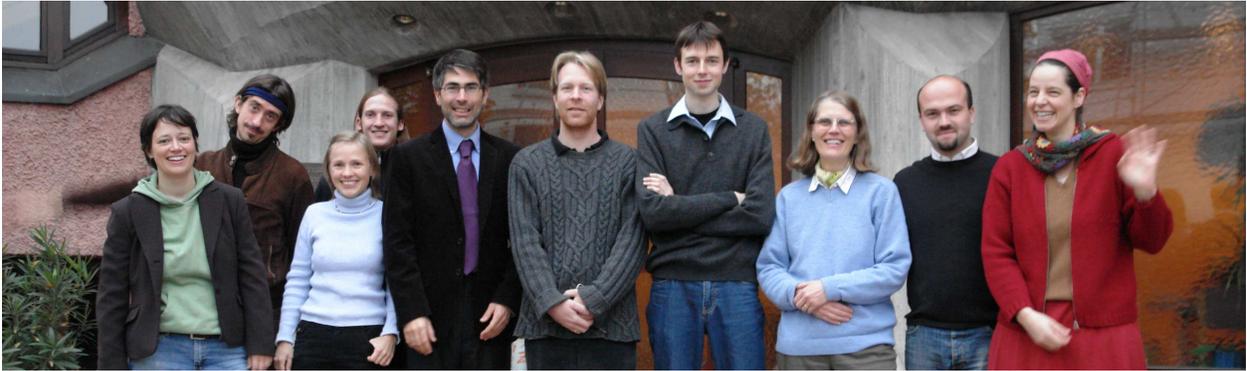
We also have the opportunity to go through such transformation in our lives. Such transformation is helpful especially in those extreme high moments of feeling like being on top of the world or those extreme low moments when we feel that all have failed, that no one understands, that even those who are closest to us have betrayed us. In such moments, our souls are attacked not only by outer appraisals or judgments, but also by our own feelings and thoughts of superiority or inadequacy. These are the best moments to free ourselves from all the outer and the inner voices and take into ourselves golden ideals such as “My heart be filled with Thy pure life, O Christ” or “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers” and dwell in these ideals.

When we fill ourselves with such thoughts, we experience inner transformation. Our hearts start beating differently. By taking these ideals into ourselves, we become renewed with golden strength. Neither outer criticism, nor inner judgments can take away such golden strength from us. This golden strength in us helps us withstand all burning temptations. It endures and transforms those extreme moments into moments of golden offerings that we can bring to the earth with genuine inner motivation and unwavering good will.

## *Sunset Supper on the Porch*



## Students Abroad ...



From left to right

**Liza Marcato (USA)** studied for two semesters at the Chicago seminary, 2004/2005. She transferred to the Stuttgart seminary for her third and fourth semester followed by an internship in Hamburg, Germany. She is now on her way to ordination in February 2008. We already look forward to her return to the US.

**Sebastian Bardach (Argentina)** behind Liza Marcato.

**Johanna Huenig (Germany)** spent two semesters at the seminary in Chicago and is now in the fourth semester.

**Yecu Yago Barnech (Argentina)** behind Johanna Huenig.

**Hugh Thornton (USA)** is in the fourth semester.

**Ben Black (Canada)** is on his way to ordination in February 2008

**Jan Rischke (Germany)** spent one semester in Chicago and is now in the second semester.

**Marianne de Nooij (The Netherlands)**, came for her first semester to Chicago in the fall of 2005. She is now in the fourth semester.

**Jonah Evans (USA)** spent two semesters in Chicago followed by a one-year internship in the congregation in Forest Row, Britain. He is now in the fourth semester.

**Sophia Pan Averbuj (Australia)** was one of our first three students in the fall of 2003. After one semester she left to travel to Argentina and got married, spent some time in Argentina and went back to Australia. She is now in the second semester.

Not in the photo are **Michael Latham (USA)** who is on a break and **Nora Minassian (USA)** who is presently gaining experience in the congregation and is teaching children with special needs at a Waldorf School in Essen, Germany.

## Falling Leaf

By Fernando Chevallier Boutell

Who are you?  
I see your brilliant green vitality.  
Without asking nor knowing  
You bring me air...

You let the suns and moons touch you  
And the wind rock you...  
I heard you

Who are you?  
I see you red  
And turning gold

I saw you jumping off the branch  
And for one moment you were free,  
floating...

Who are you?  
I see you in my hand  
brown, proudly you keep your shape

And when I see you I see the tree, the  
sky, the earth  
But, over all, I see the sun

Oak leaf  
Your name does not matter  
I only know that here in my room  
You are my venerable leaf  
From this autumn.

## A New Initiative...

A week for members in Chicago

During the waning days of August 2007 from the four points of the compass, nine seekers, most members of The Christian Community, gathered together at the Chicago Seminary for five days of exploration, study and conversation on the theme: **“Walking with Christ - Working from Christ”** ...

Being an avid Bridge player, I came to think - pardon my all too earthly way - that The Act of Consecration of Man could be compared to the game. In both there is never a point where one arrives; where one knows it all; where one finishes. And that is what makes both ever new and exciting ...

Coming together to share among ourselves on this journey is a special blessing. The intention is that it becomes an annual event - hooray!

- Terri Bennett, New York, New York

The theme of the week seemed to encompass the fact, that you could not possibly encompass everything. From the many people who attended, the fast pace, discussions and activities made anyone who thought they were on a retreat, realize that perhaps more than anything else, they were actually on the forefront or the charge of the Christian Community. But more than all of our differences, more than our many way's of thinking and our prejudices, biases, varying points of view and often humorous disagreements, was the idea of our commonalities, was the idea of community life and thought, and in the center was Christ, his thinking and his presence in all of our lives...

- Martin Young, Fayetteville, N.C.

The “fuss” was this - a week of the most in-depth and wondrous conversation and sharing I have ever participated in. From discussions on the four gospels, to examination of different aspects of the Act of Consecration; from opening up possibilities with the Lord's Prayer to reflecting on what it might mean to “walk with Christ, work from Christ”, each conversation was a precious elixir which I felt nurture and deepen my spiritual awareness...

- Donna Simmons, Viroqua, Wisconsin



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*We understand that some of you may be receiving more than one copy of this newsletter. At this time we do not have the resources to cross check the mailing lists we receive from individual congregations which may have your name on more than one list. Please help us by sharing this letter with others!*

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