

# The Chicago Seminary News

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

SPRING SEMESTER 2009

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

During the Fall semester we experienced a coming together from many points of the globe - finding our places in a new constellation, with a gradual settling into the coziness of the oncoming winter. At Christmastime we reversed our paths and splintered off to widely separated corners of the world - each with our own experiences. Once again, in late January, we formed again into yet another constellation - formed outwardly by a somewhat smaller group of students with renewed bonds and connections, and colored inwardly by continued soul growth. This Winter-Spring term has brought repeated opportunities to live into this pattern: visiting students who come for Open Courses bring new dimensions to our constellation, affording us new viewpoints and new awareness. And, through our traveling to visit other congregations - to experience being received into their constellations and to feel our movement within them, we experience the expansion of a perceived form from the opposite pole. We each perceive our own individuality - a constellation of one - but can find it only in relation to any group of which we are a part.

We are enveloped within the most enlivened constellation of all: The Christian Community. Our destinies are influenced by each other, whether it be through a distant connection, or more directly through your participation in an Open Course with us here at the Seminary.

Kathleen Clark



### *The Oh! experience*

Gisela Wielki

When the “really young” came to visit us for a week, Seth Jordan, Peter Buckbee, Amos Dancey, former students and some of their friends from Think OutWord, Sarah Hearn, Tom O’Keefe and Kristin Dalton, things changed noticeably at the seminary. A Goethe portrait from the library suddenly appeared in a kitchen cupboard. Our revered sculpture of The two disciples on the way to Emmaus, found itself on the library table surrounded by chop stick sculptures and tomato can towers with a profound message scribbled on paper scraps, and house hold articles where hanging from the ceiling fan. Every day we found something new or rearranged. It was a joy to see how our visitors ‘moved in’, helping us to see the familiar with new eyes. In the course of the week the surprise element and the ‘oh experience’ took hold of all of us, with everyone taking part in the fun and the subtle message that it is good to ever again rearrange the furniture “inside”. In case there are other young people who are eager to rearrange the furniture of the seminary, be sure to apply.



Tom, Kristin, Seth, Peter and Sarah

## *Weavings*

Ann Burfeind

This semester at the seminary included the opportunity to visit a number of communities in North America. We studied for two weeks with Daniel Hafner in Toronto. We also spent two weeks in New York State visiting the Christian Communities in Spring Valley, Manhattan and Taconic - Berkshire. During the time spent in Manhattan we studied the Sermon on the Mount with Erk Ludwig. In the Taconic Berkshire community we explored the Role of Evil with Douglas Sloan and Laura Summer. Both of these courses were well attended by community members who helped to create a learning experience that was both diversified and deepened by their presence.

The Canadian visit took place in February, but is most memorable for the warmth that we experienced through the members of the community. During the morning course we worked with Daniel to investigate the St. John's Gospel. The afternoon was spent with the forms, structure, paintings, windows and sculptures of the First Goetheanum. Our afternoon breaks and evenings were spent studying Greek and Occult Science. The rhythm of the day was strong, which laid the foundation for the weaving even away from our home base.

The Act of Consecration of Man began the day followed by a shared breakfast. Daniel taught the gospel straight out of the Greek text and allowed us to quiz him on various translations. The symmetry and various motifs of the gospel were unveiled as we continued to plunge into the depths of the mystery wisdom.

In the afternoons Daniel described for us the First Goetheanum. The images described in Occult Science were made visible throughout the Goetheanum. In columns, windows and paintings, the wisdom and development of the human being rang forth. We

studied the inner lawfulness which created the forms of the building. This lawfulness also is revealed in the planetary evolution. This was our approach. The same method can be applied to all of our courses at the seminary. The study of the inner lawfulness informs our life and work. It is that which weaves the disparate parts together. In this working we are woven together as well.



Second semester students - Darryl Coonan, Ann Burfeind and Kathleen Clark

## *'The Seed is the Word'* (Luke 8)

As part of our gospel studies, students are occasionally given the assignment to translate a thought-image from the gospel into their own words and images.

### Darryl Coonan

A seed is only a seed if it has potential to bring into being new life, a new plant or tree. A word is a seed if it has a germ in its essence that can bring forth something new, a new awareness, a new deed, a new emotion.

Many words are spoken and do not produce anything. We are often inundated by words and we block them out completely or filter them. How often do we really listen? The words we use need to be of value in the first place - we need to bring our conscious selves - our "I" - into forming words that have in them a germ, not every thought needs to be uttered. Words that hold truth and beauty and good can carry over as a seed to another person.

As there is timing and a season in planting seeds, the same could be said of planting words or ideas - there are moments when another is receptive and lets you in - is able to hear - so timing is important.

If words do find a way into another person they may take root (or lay fallow for a time).

If words have a germ, are heard and pass through another's defenses, they may eventually be taken up by

the other with their own soul forces to grow into something new.

Words offered out of love without intentions to encroach on the freedom of the other are more likely to be heard and will possibly grow into something new.

**Samuel Parker, guest student**

The seed, that is the word, gracefully fills any space where it is sown or spoken. Even if senses simply see the seed and merely hear the word, fulfillment is followed by an outburst and overflow. Let us respond to this infinite abundance! The seed begs us to ever expand our fertile fields. The word begs us for an ever deepening depth of soul space.

The seed asks that our eyes grow eyes. The word asks us that our ears grow ears.

## *A Glimpse of the Trinity in Luke 15*

**Tom O’Keefe, guest student**

When I visited the Seminary for a week of courses, the Gospel study focused on Luke 15: The three parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son. These are told by Christ Jesus in response to the accusation that “he receives sinners and sits at table with them” (Jon Madsen, 185). The consistent theme running throughout is the sentiment that even a single individual who has lost his way in sin will awaken great joy in the “angels of God” when he finally “changes heart and mind” (JM, 186). The parables represent a single principle of divine forgiveness from three angles; but why is this principle shown from these three particular angles?

The first angle given is that of a shepherd who loses one sheep and leaves his other 99 sheep to go in search of the one lost. Here is shown a picture of the concern of the spiritual world over one human being from an intermediary perspective. This is the perspective of human affairs from the viewpoint of Christ, the Son, who cares for human beings as a shepherd cares for his sheep. The next angle given is the parable of a woman who has lost one of her 10 coins. This can be seen as a cosmic perspective of The Fall, as a result of which the 10th hierarchy of humanity is severed from its connection to the other 9 Angelic Hierarchies. This separation of humanity from the guidance of the Hierarchies is felt by the Father as something like losing one of His 10 precious coins. From this perspective, the whole evolution of humanity can be seen as the process of the Father losing, searching for, and finding the “lost coin” of a free humanity.

The third parable gives us an even closer human perspective of this process of redemption, in the form of a specific example of one who traverses the path of “losing - seeking - finding.” What is unique about the third parable is that two characters (the lost son and the forgiving father) equally experience this sequence. Here it becomes clear that at the heart of the process of redemption is a mutual human-divine experience: not only does the spiritual world wish to find the lost human being, but equally significant is the human being’s freely willed path back to the divine. It is from the perspective of the Holy Spirit—Who experiences the intimacy of human thoughts—that the patient father rejoices at his lost son’s return; likewise, the lost son’s repentance is an expression of the awakened activity of the Holy Spirit in his soul.

If we retain this insight from the human perspective (of the mutual nature of the human and divine seeking for each other) then the earlier, more removed perspectives can be approached again with greater understanding. From the intermediary perspective, we now see that the lost sheep sought by Christ also represents an individual with inner experiences who is seeking for Christ without necessarily knowing it. Likewise, from the cosmic perspective, we now see that the “lost coin” (or 10th hierarchy), comprised of the many “lost sheep,” collectively longs for reunion with the Father, for this is all that will ultimately make it whole again.

The third parable is the key to the living picture that finally emerges: a picture of the fact that the process described is essentially a mutual one. In other words, in “stretching” the insight of the human perspective into the context of the cosmic perspective, we can conclude that the process of “changing heart and mind” in full freedom is the mystery of the redemption of the future 10th hierarchy, and the secret of the Angels’ rejoicing.

*Further thoughts from the theme in Luke 15 – losing, seeking and finding*

### **Losing**

**Ann Burfeind**

We all have had the experience of losing something. That which was in place has left its rightful position and is now gone. In every stage of life something is lost. Children lose their teeth. One by one the milk teeth are pushed out by that which will be new. The tooth is lost. The loss creates a space which eventually will be filled with something new.

## Seeking

Darryl Coonan

We often seek what we know is missing

The remote control for the TV; the missing chess piece; the piece of the jigsaw puzzle; the stray sheep

We seem to have an innate desire to make things whole, to find the missing part that causes us to feel incomplete!

We can also seek what we do not already know, also out of a sense of feeling incomplete.

We sense something missing within ourselves. It may be a vague feeling that something we once held onto has disappeared, we feel a loss and want to find something to make us feel whole again. We seek answers to real life puzzles.

We may seek to find a union with something beyond ourselves, out of a dim recollection of a source of wholeness that was once available to us, without the need to seek it.

## Finding

Kathleen Clark

Child plays under the Maple

Buried dime found

Breathless running, treasure waved.

## *Trinity: Light, Life and Love*

Darryl Coonan

The title for one of our courses “Trinity: Light, Life and Love” with Gisela Wielki seemed both an ambitious undertaking and yet also one full of promise. For me, the concept of the Trinity always seemed nebulous and evanescent. When I would approach a clearer understanding of the Trinity from reading other people’s reflections or from my own meditations, there would be moments when a picture would form, and tantalize me for awhile, only to then recede gradually back into the fog from whence it emerged. I was relieved to know that my struggle is not apparently that unusual. In the pre-Christian mystery centers the Trinity was understood through initiate wisdom, it was not held as an intellectual knowing. From the time of early Christianity the old wisdom known in the mystery centers gradually receded and the church fathers and theologians have since had to grapple with an intellectual understanding of this reality with less and less surety.

One aspect of our course compared the Trinity to our own trinity - body, soul and spirit. The father God gives us our physical substance and we are part of his substance. The Christ is the creative force and relates to our soul nature. He also gives us our “I”, a spark of the spirit implanted into our soul, and the Holy Spirit relates to our spiritual nature and supports our “I” in its task of transforming and spiritualizing our lower members.

Another aspect of our Trinitarian nature is in our soul, one can think of the Father God corresponding to our Sentient Soul; the Son God relating to our Intellectual Soul; and the Spirit God relating to our consciousness soul.

Understanding our own threefold nature and relating this back to the picture of the Trinity helped me hold onto some clearer understanding of the Godhead. If we are created as an image of the Godhead it seems reasonable to find a deeper understanding of this mystery from out of our own threefoldness.

The hardest part of the Trinity has been grasping the role of the Spirit God - to me the most ephemeral of the three - the course helped me come to a better personal understanding.

Christ is the archetype or representative of a fully redeemed human being and the task of the Holy Spirit is to show us the way to this goal in freedom. The Holy Spirit does not intrude on our free will; we have to invite him to join in our evolutionary task to become spiritual beings again. The relationship to the Holy Spirit is an individual and a conscious one and is as close as we want it to be.

Christ revealed the Father God and sent the Spirit God, the Spirit God now helps us see and understand our relationship with the Father God and the Son God. The Spirit God is the spirit of truth, wisdom, revelation, consciousness, enlightenment and purpose. In the Spirit God we come to know ourselves and this knowing flows into relationships. The Holy Spirit can lead us to healing and wholeness if we consciously cooperate.

## *World of Things – Shards*

Kathleen Clark

Scything in the meadow

Scraps of the past

Hit an old jar

Hidden under the earth

Angled splinters fly

Archaeologists search

Redirect my path      Reading the scraps

Downhill toward the brook      Dig for more  
Seeing the picture.

Darryl Coonan

Suffering      Sometimes      Stop

Hurts more      Having      Hoping

Alone like      A      Against all  
reality

Remorseless      Rupture

Desolation      Develops      Realign with  
your



## *The World as Word*

Richard Dancey

Here are some of the assignments given in the ongoing class of World as Word:

Create a modern version of the parable of the Seed and the Sower.

Describe a natural object or phenomenon without using its name. Turn it into a riddle.

Create a story or a description of the phenomenon of “beginning”.

Create a Michael story

Discover what makes Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” a masterpiece of language.

Describe a winter phenomenon that you observe with your senses as accurately and vividly as you can so that through language the listener *sees* it.

Turn a description of an outer object or phenomenon into questions, into verbs.

As you gather, dear reader, from the samples, we work with language; we play with language. We seek to wake up, more and more, to the activity and the phenomenon of the Word. We explore and exercise this power and wonder of becoming wordsmiths, word-midwives, word-bringers and perceivers: Word-Beings. Logos-servants. That is our ongoing intent and aim. What a wonder-full task.

## *Nature Observations*

Darryl Coonan

The green symmetrical conifers in their year round attire stand in harmony beside the birch trees still in their undressed winter state awaiting delivery of their spring fashions. We could turn over a new leaf and learn to coexist as harmoniously in our diversity.

The pond was covered by translucent ice and a layer of snow, which kept what lay below the surface a mystery. Near one edge of the pond the sun had melted through the icy cover in two places like a pair of ‘eyes’ that revealed the clear water and sandy floor below. Human eyes reveal hidden depths.

The geese flying high in two loosely connected formations that intersect, re-arrange and form into two new groups. One of the geese sets these events in motion; another goose holds them in the newly configured connection. Each has a role that seems to change out of a relationship with the whole, they take up a new role, a new challenge - sometimes the roles we play are forced on us by necessity.

Kathleen Clark

Lingering spring ice on pond

Redwings don’t care

Sing their hearts out anyway

*“The Water of Life – in Fairy Tales, in the Apocalypse, in the Sacraments”*

From the Main Lesson - given by Susan Locey we have the following contributions:

Willing the well that wills

Allows, resigning, subsiding

Teeming with enlightened tides of others’

Eddies dipping and ripples awakening wakes

Rainbows of mediating meandering.

Samuel Parker, guest student

## Standing on the Shore

Standing- upright with shifting sand beneath,

The surging, pounding, insistent waves move forward and back under my feet. The firm ground moves out to the sea, being carried in a flush. I shift my weight in the pooling waters and stand- with clean feet.

The horizon line of the sea ripples up towards the clouds and lowers itself again. What is the constant in the sea? The waters, never still, change their configuration and cling to one another. They hold together through clouds, sea, mist, river and snow. The waters find themselves again and again through seasons and eons, moving, trickling, pooling, always spilling downward, and floating upward, condensing and expanding- always in motion- motion the constant.

Ann Burfeind



## Out of Africa

Jonah Evans

Ten days after I was ordained in Wuppertal, Germany, December 2008, I was on a plane to South Africa. Normally one has at least four weeks to digest and prepare for a new community after being ordained. My destiny was different. My new birth into the priesthood couldn't wait.

It was like that at my earthly birth as well. Two and a half months premature. Caesarian. Stayed in an incubator for the first month. (Strange how these things work.)

Johannesburg has also been a bit of an incubator. As soon as I got here I realized that my California drivers license had expired. And you really need a car in Joburg. It's a car city. There is just no public transport and everything is far apart. So I live and work on the Church grounds. Don't get me wrong, I have no complaints, there are three houses on the property and a huge beautiful garden.

Driving around Joburg is an interesting experience. It is a dynamic mixture of beautiful trees (it is the largest planted forest in the world), and security gates. Everywhere you go you are met with green branches hanging over barbed and electric wire. And the polarity does not stop there. For example, some of the most luxurious, largest houses I have ever seen sit beside townships of extreme poverty. Or a blind beggar with no shoes on his feet, pleading to a man in a Ferrari. Johannesburg is a place of dynamic contrast wherever one looks.

This dynamic energy also exists in the community here as well. I don't know if I have ever experienced such an interested or active community as the one here in Joburg. Even though I was sent here to help in difficult times, the community here is far from defeated. There is almost one study group per day here. The board of trustees is vibrant and dedicated. And Reingard Knausenberger (Coordinator for South Africa) has really maintained integrity in all aspects of the sacramental life. She is a real pillar in our movement. I have to admit to being very impressed.

Joburg has been a wonderful community to get my feet wet in. They have really welcomed me fully, even though I am an American! My wife Katie has also found her experience here as surprisingly pleasant.

Even though I really am a bit homesick and can't wait to get started in my new community in Spring Valley New York, spending my first six months in South Africa has been an experience of a lifetime. From experiencing Christmas in Summer, to the wonderfully vibrant countryside Waldorf School in Limpopo (see picture), the journey has been tremendously rewarding.

P.S. I highly recommend the biltong (beef jerky).

Edit. Jonah began his training in Chicago in the fall of 2005



## *A Bicentennial and A Penny's Worth*

How often do we disregard the penny on the ground? With value next to none, it is hardly worth bending down for it. Now and then the government considers to all together discontinue minting the penny with production costs higher than what it is worth.

But can we really imagine that the penny might all but disappear, for us to be deprived forever of that brief moment of delight at the sight of a shiny penny with its bright, reddish copper glow? How marvelous that the lowliest, the least of coins should be able to out-shine all the other coins. True, its monetary value is next to nothing, but what about its inner, immaterial wealth?

What else reminds us so unassumingly, so unobtrusively, as it is passed from hand to hand, of the humility of the truly great, of courage and honesty, of compassion and love and the refrain from vengeance in the midst of bitter warfare *with malice towards none, with charity for all?* What other portrait on a coin speaks so discretely of such a painful truth, that sometimes death, loss of life, is asked for as the ultimate sacrifice to right a wrong, to grant freedom and dignity to all?

Abraham Lincoln was fatally wounded on Good Friday 1865. He died the following morning. Some people reported seeing on the day of his second inauguration in the afternoon a bright star in the sky, where earlier in the day the sun had stood. It is a rare but natural phenomenon, for Venus to be seen in the day, close to the sun (planetary Ephemerides 1865). Abraham Lincoln was born on a Sunday. Little did the world know then of the rising of a star, who would so closely align his life's work with the one, whose light and love is often portrayed in the image of the sun. In Him humanity can be but one, for He and humanity have but one Father who is in the Heavens.

In the course of the last six years the seminary has received financial support from a total of 472 donors. The Seminary Newsletter is sent to about 3000 addresses. Donation amounts have ranged from \$5 to an initial \$50,000. A good many of these donations were from one-time donors in response to our founding appeal. Some have since given once or twice a year, of which a few amounts are very substantial, and a few donors even pledge monthly. This group of friends has performed the miracle of giving the seminary a debt free building and has helped us to meet our annual operating expenses, which no institution can cover with tuition income only.

In case you have never given and would like to be added to that magic number of 472, now is the time. No amount is too small, if only to help us cover the printing and mailing costs of this newsletter.

With gratitude for all we have received and with trust in our friends continued generosity and the hope that some of you will consider a first time donation,

Yours, Gisela Wielki

Participants in the course 'Not I, but Christ in me' A Path of Inner Attitude and Outer Deed



Jonah Evan's enjoying time with his new colleagues Liza Marcato and Sanford Miller, shortly after his ordination last December



training in Chicago in the Fall of 2004, will be ordained in Berlin on May 24<sup>th</sup> 2009. We send our good wishes.

## A Summer Retreat at the Seminary

### The Sacrament and Destiny June 18-21, 2009

Arrival June 17<sup>th</sup>

Cost \$250

Fee includes room, breakfast and supper. Contributors Richard Dancey, Gisela Wielki and others.

For more details and to register,

please contact Gisela Wielki

[info@seminary-chicago.org](mailto:info@seminary-chicago.org) or

773 472-7041

### Main Courses at the Seminary Winter/Spring Semester 2009

Jan. 26 - Jan.30 2009

'Not I, but Christ in me' A Path of Inner Attitude and Outer Deed

Richard Dancey

Feb. 2 - Feb. 6

Space, Time and the Divine: Exploring everyday experiences as doorways

Oliver Steinrueck

Feb. 23 - Feb. 27

The Water of life - In Fairy tales, in the Apocalypse, in the Sacraments

Susan Locey

Mar. 2 - Mar. 6

The Activity of the Temple of Liberty in American History

Rick Spaulding

Mar. 9 - Mar. 13

Trinity: Light, Life and Love

Gisela Wielki

Mar. 30 - April 3

The Countenance of Creation - Vertical and Horizontal

Gisela Wielki

April 6 - April 10

Holy Week - Death and Resurrection of the Body

Richard Dancey

Other Courses conducted with the communities in Toronto, Hillsdale and New York

The Sermon on the Mount

Erk Ludwig

Encountering Evil: Explorations into the Task of Our Times

Douglas Sloan and Laura Summer (painting).

The Goetheanum

Daniel Hafner

The Gospel of John

Daniel Hafner

Nora Minassian who began her



Apology - Sorry we rely on the mailing lists provided by each congregation and do not currently have a way of cross referencing these lists. If you receive more than one copy you may be able to pass one on to another interested person.

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