



# Cathedral Script

1440 Union Avenue, Montreal H3A 2B8  
cathoff@bellnet.ca  
www.montrealcathedral.ca

*Editorial Board* Krishanu Dasgupta, Ann Elbourne,  
Janet King, Duncan Shaddick  
*Editor* Beth Adams  
*Design* Beth Adams and Jonathan Sa'adah

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## MORE THAN WE CAN ASK OR IMAGINE *a message from Paul*



### SPRING 2011

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Praying was, for me, the most difficult part of the transition from the UK to Montreal—and the wonderful team of volunteers who lead Morning and Evening Prayer each day in our cathedral had to endure my angst! Everything changed for me—a new country, new church, new friends, new colleagues, a new place to live and so much to discover. It is unnerving at age 49 suddenly not knowing how to do the most basic of things: how to find a doctor, how to pay for dental care or pay bills. The one constant I needed through all this change was God—*the same today, yesterday and for ever*, but even my praying had to change. I have said or sung Morning and Evening Prayer almost every day since I was about 10 years old. The traditional cadences of the psalms and canticles run deep in my veins and, of course, I have developed my own way of saying them and praying them and loving them. The same is true of the Eucharist—for many years I have been the only priest in a parish, returning to the altar day by day, finding in the discipline and constancy the greatest of inner strengths—for in the changes and chances of this fleeting world, the Daily Office and the Eucharist have kept me true to my vocation not as social worker, psychoanalyst or political activist but as a priest.

But with the move to Montreal even praying had to change. The cathedral is never an empty silent place. It is always a shared space, a people's space. The liturgies of the cathedral do not belong to me, they are the people's work. This is how it should be, the very meaning of the word Liturgy, but this transition has been the hardest.

And God has been revealed in new ways. So many people at the cathedral have been extraordinarily kind and generous in welcoming Jonathan and me and caring for us—you have been the messengers and ministers of the presence of God. I have been overwhelmed by the faith, hope and charity which I have found in so many places. ***Surely the Lord is in this place, This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!*** I want to say to say with Jacob—and perhaps I need to add, with Jacob and a little humility, ***“and I did not know it”***.

Five months on, what have I learned? What can I dare to share with you? I have learned that God is always with us—***Emmanuel***—strong and faithful and wonderful in the new, unfamiliar and at times fright-

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ening places of our lives into which each one of us must constantly go, day by day, year by year. I have learned that ‘my prayer life’ is not mine at all—but is God’s prayer life and that I am called not to create it but to enter into it, to pray within God’s community—with angels and arch-angels—earthly and heavenly. And I think I am beginning to learn the meaning of that overused word ‘awesome’— *“How awesome is this place”*—a combination of fear and wonder and reverence: fear, because of the dangers and difficulties we face in a sometimes hostile and mainly indifferent world; wonder, because of the extraordinary goodness of God and reverence because everything is ultimately in God’s hands, not ours.

So where do we go from here? Here are couple of personal reflections.

The Cathedral Forum has adopted the phrase *“a spiritual oasis in the heart of Montreal”* as part of our Mission Statement—so let everything we do, our liturgies, our ministries, our building, our life together, be filled with the knowledge of the presence of God-with-us. Let us become the place where the people God calls can find God waiting.

Let us strive to grow as a community—getting to know one another, welcoming new people into our loving heart. We can do this on Sunday mornings in our ministry of welcome and over coffee, but we might want to think about house-groups, discussion groups, prayer groups and film nights. We might want to consider a Sunday Education Program from 9am—9.45am where we can learn from each other and share together. And let us hope for great things and put our trust wholly in God—*‘whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine’*.

Paul

HOLD THE DATE! Our **Cathedral Fall Retreat** will be held at Auberge Schweizer beginning Friday evening October 14 and ending Sunday after lunch. Details to follow.



Dean Paul Kennington preaches to a large congregation on Easter Sunday morning.

## Women’s Ordination: Some Thoughts on the Past... and the Present

by Ann Elbourne

The Cathedral community has probably never been perfect, and prejudices of one kind or another have abounded. In the 18th century, for example, many prominent and respected Montrealers owned slaves, including David Delisle, minister to the protestant population of Montreal and chaplain to the garrison, who in 1766 bought a slave named Charles. Slavery was no longer tolerated by the end of the century but class distinctions were still rife. From the early days of Christ Church Cathedral until the 1960s it was customary for people to purchase their pews and pay pew rents. Rich parishioners like the Molsons had the best pews at the front of

the church. The poor sat at the back. The narrowness of social beliefs was well summed up in a popular hymn:

*The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
God made them high or lowly,  
And ordered their estate.*

Pew rents were finally abolished by Dean Bothwell in the 1960s, but the church was still dominated by white, middle-class males. The priest’s authority was unquestioned; he had a direct line to God—and of course he was a man. As late as 1970 men performed all the jobs in the public eye. They were church wardens, treasurers and sidesmen. Women taught in the Sunday school and ran the Chancel Guild; they ironed and mended the altar linens, polished the brass and arranged the flowers. In the 1970s all this

began to change. Women were increasingly put in positions of authority and political awareness removed exclusively male nouns and adjectives. However, there was still much resistance to the idea of the ordination of women.

It was argued that Christ chose men to be his apostles, so a woman could not become a priest. St Paul was liberally quoted: women should be submissive to men; they should keep silence in church. Some of the comments made at the time seem really shocking to us today. For example, a male priest in Montreal stated that any woman who aspired to the priesthood was a spiritual whore.

Mary Daly, a self-styled post-Christian feminist philosopher, told the Gazette in 1985, "It seems like women trying to get equality in the Christian church is like Blacks fighting for executive positions in the Ku Klux Klan.... Christianity is a woman-hating religion."

Nevertheless, a few determined women broke through the gender barrier. The first woman priest in Montreal, Lettie James, was ordained in October 1978, the twelfth brave woman in Canada to follow this path. She was a member of the Cathedral congregation when she began her training, and a few Cathedral people, led by Frances Sheppard and including a few men, formed a support group for women in priesthood. They met every Tuesday during the noon Eucharist and prayed for each candidate by name as well as praying for those opposed to women priests. They also wrote letters to every woman theological student in Canada and prayed for them daily.

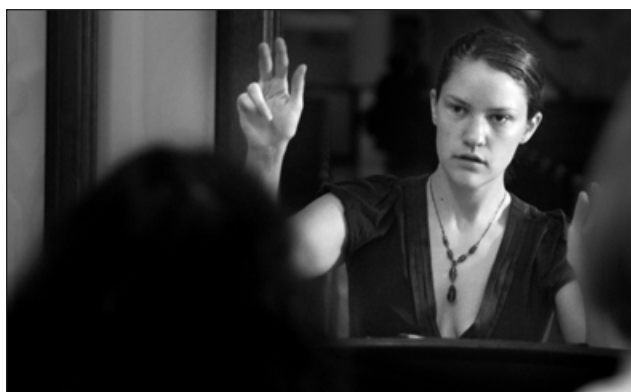
Lettie's ordination was stressful. Twenty-six Anglican clergy and fifty lay people protested, and then walked out. When Lettie was assigned to the tiny parish of Delson, an official at Anglican House telephoned the warden saying, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is that we have found you a priest. The bad news is that she's a woman." Quite soon, however, Lettie was able to say, "The fact that I am a woman is irrelevant. My congregation accepts me as a priest, not a woman priest."

I have been in the congregation at the Cathedral for several ordinations, but two stand out as heartbreaking, magnificent and historical. The first was that groundbreaking ordination of Lettie James, thirty three years ago. The second was only yesterday, June 5th, when Rhonda Waters and Robert Camara were ordained deacons. Both ordinations were marked by a clergy-led protest and walk-out, but the focus of the protests had shifted: yesterday there were no objections to the ordination of Rhonda Waters, so completely acceptable have women priests become. Prejudice has moved from denying the legitimacy of women priests to claiming that someone who is in a single sex marriage, as Robert Camara is, cannot be ordained, even as a deacon. On the other hand, there was a pleasing similarity between the two events in that both presiding bishops, Reginald Hollis and Barry Clarke, were unwavering in their determination to act lovingly and yet justly in combating preju-

dice. Inspired by this leadership, the congregation in the Cathedral, present as friends to witness the ordination of Rhonda and Robert, rose to their feet and applauded for several minutes to show their support for the candidates.

Just as the Cathedral supported women in the Seventies, so it has supported the rights of gay people in recent decades. The rainbow flag at the back of the church reminds us that in spite of our diversity we are a community of Christians with the duty to be open to one another and to care for one another. We need not fear change. It is good that our clergy are no longer slave owners and that women nowadays are equal to the men in our congregation. We have tried and will continue to try to overcome prejudice, remembering we are all equal before God. It has been a great privilege that so many talented women priests have served God and cherished our community in the Cathedral. In the words of Psalm 99 —

*O sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things...  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.* ■



J. Sa'adah

### **THANK YOU AND FAREWELL TO ASSISTANT ORGANIST HILARY PUNNETT**

On July 30, our assistant organist, Hilary Punnett (left), will marry former assistant organist Donald Hunt in a ceremony here at Christ Church Cathedral, and then the couple will leave for England where they will both be employed in churches next year. Hilary has done an extraordinary job during her four years with us, two as organ scholar and two as assistant. She received her Master's degree in organ performance this spring, and while sorry to leave Montreal says she will be happy to be finished with school and begin a normal life with her soon-to-be-husband, who has been working in English cathedrals for the past two years. Please be sure to offer your thanks and best wishes to Hilary before she leaves us.

Music Director Patrick Wedd is pleased to announce that our current organ scholar, Rachele Choi, will become the new assistant organist.

# Reflecting on Lent, Holy Week and Easter



Working at the art table



Silent meditation in St. Anselm's Chapel, with the city beyond.



Rose Riley, who ran the kitchen with great skill and sensitivity



Rose Riley and Vivian Lewin, the retreat coordinator



Krish Dasgupta (above), Barbara Smith (right), Bob King and Jonathan Sa'adah all helped in the kitchen



Barbara Smith in the kitchen at Fulford

**OUR LENTEN RETREAT**  
photographs by Donna Riley



Our meals were delicious and surprisingly communicative though silent!



Rest for both body and spirit!



And on Sunday morning we were finally able to talk, and begin to unpack our experiences.

## DISCIPLES CAN'T GO BACK TO THEIR USUAL LIVES

by Anne S. Douglas

This year I realised that Holy Week with its culmination in Easter is a time of transformation, not just for Jesus but for all his disciples.

Early in the week that we now call Holy Week Jesus says, “While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become children of light.”

I think of that light as consciousness.

I have come to know that when an account in the Bible that I hear or read resonates within me it's because it's summoning me to a deeper meaning that I am bound to become conscious of.

This year the experience of two disciples in particular resonated with me—Peter and Mary Magdalene. I felt as though I were inevitably being drawn into their experience with them, particularly after the resurrection, as Jesus guided them through a transformation to new spiritual maturity and responsibility.

Peter is so exuberant and impetuous. At the Paschal supper he tells Jesus to wash his hands and head as well his feet so that he'll have a greater share in him. Later that evening he tells Jesus he will lay down his life for him. But then after Jesus's arrest he betrays him three times, just as Jesus told him he would.

This was the instinctive reaction of a man who was terrified. His beloved Jesus had been arrested but Peter lacked the courage to acknowledge he knew him; his companions were scattering; he had nothing to hang onto; his usual security had disintegrated; if he acknowledged he knew Jesus, he would be arrested too; he was just trying to save his own familiar skin. But oh the grief of it, because not only had he betrayed his friend, but almost worse, in denying Jesus he had betrayed his own best self. My heart always goes out to Peter. This year my heart went out to him more than ever—actually it was going out to myself. I know I am guilty of many self-betraysals and I don't always know what they are. But I can recognise those times I have lacked courage.

However Peter is given a chance to make it up to Jesus. We know Jesus forgives him. After his resurrection Jesus waits lovingly on the beach while Peter is fishing with some of the other disciples. Peter is trying to go back to his usual life but Jesus won't let him. When Peter sees Jesus he leaps out of the boat. And then after they share a meal Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves him. And

Peter, even though he's hurt to be asked three times, affirms his love each time. And we know he not only means it—he's meant it before—but that he will truly live it. He can now acknowledge that he's ready for a life of commitment to the Way of Jesus. This is Peter's transformation.

I found that extraordinarily consoling this year. It somehow gave me the faith that I will be able to say yes to the Way, and live it.



On Palm Sunday, head server George Deare holds palm branches braided in the Quebec style by Marko Hubert.

We don't have an account of what Mary Magdalene has been experiencing during the week but we can imagine she accompanied Jesus as much as she could. We know she was at the cross, and she was waiting with one or two other women to anoint Jesus' body early in the morning after the Sabbath. (Interestingly, Peter was in the garden too but Jesus chose Mary as the one to whom he will appear.) Mary recognises him when he says “Mary” to her in his familiar intimate voice. She responds, “Rabboni”, that is, *teacher*. Jesus tells her not to touch him. This year I was reading a version of the Bible in which Jesus says to Mary, “Don't cling to me”. This jolted me into experiencing the encounter in a new way. To me, this implies more than “don't touch me” or even “don't hold onto me”. In reading and listening to this passage this year, I felt Jesus was saying, “Look, you will be on your own now, Mary. My time of teaching you here has come to an end. I'm on way to my God and *your* God.” Mary's usual life has been transformed. She must withdraw her projections from her teacher and become an authority, a teacher, herself.

Hadn't he said at the beginning of the week “While you have the light, *believe* in the light so that you may become children of light”?

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## A SEASON OF UNEXPECTED GRACE

by Vivian Lewin

This year for me marked the season when I began to understand that sin and suffering are inextricably bound up with consolation and redemption.

I don't think it's a coincidence that Isaiah 40-55, the Book of Consolation, returns again and again both to the luminous promise that God will save all peoples, and the wrenching description (read during Holy Week) of the Servant whose suffering effects this salvation.

Today, when "have a good day" is almost a command, it seems neurotic or presumptuous to wish to attend to suffering. Isn't that bad for a person's self-esteem? Don't such thoughts drag us away from the Creator's wonderful purpose, the Original Blessing that goes before Original Sin?

The whole notion of sin is counter-cultural today in much the same way that suffering goes against the spirit of the times, yet there is awful suffering within and without, and brokenness that in any other time would have been diagnosed as the result of personal or collective sin.

Maggie Ross, an Anglican solitary, explains it like this (in *Writing the Icon of the Heart: In Silence Beholding*): "Western culture, and particularly Western religion, tends to avoid paradox. "When, tired of consumer culture and then of thrill culture, we turn to religions which

themselves have been designed to satisfy the hungry *me*, "noise and activity blot out silence and contemplation."

We were invited to enter Holy Week not like an 'experience' of which to weigh the pros and cons, but with fresh eyes and open hearts. I remember feeling a pang of attachment to my own good taste in church matters, wondering if I could ever do it! God is good. I did find myself beholding—*looking through*—the events of Christ's passion as they presented themselves to me, whether as MarKo Hubert's long progress on Passion Sunday up the centre aisle of the Cathedral carrying the huge cross on his shoulder, or as the smaller crucifix on Good Friday to which I brought a little candle and found a completely unexpected prayer in my heart and in my mouth.

Reflecting on this season, I recalled a passage in Charles William's *The Place Of the Lion*. Richardson, a young book seller and mystic, encounters an elderly couple walking home from their communion service at an obscure evangelical chapel and is moved to say, "I hope you had a happy service?"

They both looked at him with delight. "Now that's very kind," the old gentleman said. "Thank you, sir, it was a very beautiful service."

"Beautiful," the old lady said. She hesitated ... then taking sudden courage... "You'll excuse me, sir, I know it's old-fashioned, and you quite a stranger, but—are you saved?"

Richardson answered her as seriously as she had spoken, "I believe salvation is for all who will have it," he said, "and I will have it by the only possible means."

"Ah, that's good, that's good," the old gentleman said. "Bless God for it, young man."

"I know you'll pardon me, sir," the old lady added, "you being a stranger as I said, and strangers often not liking to talk about it. Though what else is there to talk about..."

"What indeed?" Richardson agreed. ■



## A MOMENT OF UNDERSTANDING ON MAUNDY THURSDAY

by John Ashley Burgoyne

Holy Week is a dramatic time for so many reasons. For me, a secular component to the drama has always been intertwined with the spiritual, not unlike, in our commercial age, the final weeks of Advent. As a longtime church musician, I always have a daunting pile of music to learn and an unusual density of services and rehearsals. As an academic, despite the fact that the academic calendar was decoupled from Easter long ago, Holy Week always seems to fall at the worst of all possible times, be that right before a conference deadline, amid final or mid-term exams, or just at the moment one has fallen hopelessly behind on teaching or coursework. Nevertheless, once the Week is underway, these secular distractions have never stopped the spiritual drama from seizing me at some point.

The moment that snatches my soul from its temporal distractions changes each year. Sometimes it is Jeremiah's Lamentations at Tenebrae: the Hebrew acrostic as a metaphor for cataloguing an almost unmeasurable list sorrows hits me hard when I am feeling overwhelmed. Other years I find myself feeling quite joyous (and, it must be admitted, feeling somewhat guilty about feeling joyous), unable to break my attention from the coming Resurrection and captivated by imagery like the Cross as a flowering tree. Many of my friends have told me that the service on Maundy Thursday is the most meaningful service for them—one, the son of a minister in the United Church, has fond childhood memories of the 'sleepover' afterward—but until this year, it had never been the moment that grabbed me. Maundy Thursday moved me so much this year, in fact, that I was moved to stay for quite a long time afterward in front of our Gethsemane.

This has not been my usual practise: like many of us, I imagine, it is fairly easy for me to pray for roughly the length of an organ postlude, but I get lost at the prospect of an hour or more of silent meditation. I had tried staying after Maundy Thursday services before, and it had never worked for me. Dean Kennington's sermon this year, however, confronted those fears directly, and armed by his guidance I thought that I might try it again. I'm glad I did!



John Ashley Burgoyne, one of our tenor soloists (left, facing camera), smiles during the Easter Morning Eucharist.

Of the metaphors the Dean presented in his sermon, I was especially intrigued at the notion of sharing anything and everything on one's mind with Christ to the point that one could, at last, sit silently together, like old friends content simply to enjoy each other's company. That in and of itself proved to be a relieving meditation, exactly as one would expect it to be. I was surprised, however, at a certain reciprocity that the Dean had not mentioned: a feeling that somehow, just as I had to Him, Christ had unloaded everything on His mind to me. Now I acknowledge that it is, of course, impossible to imagine even Christ Himself having truly expressed everything that could be expressed about His Passion—and indeed if it could, there would be little reason for us to continue celebrating Holy Week each year. Nonetheless, because I did have that feeling for a moment, I was able to confront more directly than I ever had before those barbaric faults of human nature that led to the Passion, and yet still to feel, as the Dean had suggested, that Christ loves us despite ourselves. That was a profound feeling of acceptance that gave me much strength to survive the rest of the Week and, I think, will be a memorable marker in my spiritual development.

Harried graduate student that I am, the idea of Christ Church Cathedral as a spiritual oasis resonates very much with me: I need a spiritual oasis somewhere! Holy Week is a time that is usually quite exciting, but not always a time that I am able to find much peace. I am so thankful that this year I did find that moment of peace, and I am proud to be able to share it with you. I hope that you had your own striking moment during Holy Week, and if you did, that you, too, in some way, have found your own way to share it. ■

## BREAKING OPEN

by Beth Adams

The winds of change have been blowing at our cathedral—more gently, perhaps, than outdoors this spring—but I think a lot of us have felt a sense of movement, anticipation, questioning, awakening. For some of us, that's been reflected inward, as we think harder about vocation, and what God may be calling us to do, both personally, and as the members and body of this community.

So it was with the intention of thinking more deeply about these things that I entered Lent this year. The Retreat, in March, surprised me. Although I'm a long-time meditator and comfortable with silence, I found the communal silence and worship much more powerful than I'd anticipated, and Paul's talks on the story of Jacob—with its multiple messages of failure, grace, and personal transformation—both a challenge and help in wrestling with my own questions. The drama of the story combined with a growing awareness that each of my fellow retreatants was undergoing some sort of personal struggle too, and that we were silently supporting one another. Twice, though, this rational analysis gave way to sheer emotion, flooding my eyes with sudden, unexpected tears. The first was during our shared Eucharist, as we passed the bread and cup to one another, which reminded me of my own return to the Church many years ago in the company of a group of women who met weekly for morning communion. Then I had left that community and those friends to move here: how I had missed them! How hard I had tried to be stoic! My tears asked if this moment represented an opening door, both to a new place and to the same "home?" And then again, in the darkness after Compline on Saturday night, I was deeply moved when Paul invited us to come forward for anointing, blessing each of us and making the sign of the cross not only on our foreheads but on our palms: a mark of priesthood, and vocation, of our hands, young and old, doing work in the world.

I was still pondering these experiences when we arrived at Holy Week. As a choir member, it was easy to accept Paul's invitation to come to all the services, but I wasn't sure about his promise of change. I've been doing all the services for many years; change has occurred, but not always dramatic change. But I was wrong to be skeptical. Together, we went from the dramatic enactment of the passion on Palm Sunday to Tenebrae's beautiful, sad laments of exile and longing; from the humility of Maundy Thursday and the Gethsemanii vigil to the emotion of Good Friday, when our church was filled with music and drama, parishioners and visitors coming forward to place a candle and a personal prayer at the foot of Jesus' cross; and on to the gathering of our

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## Disciples Can't Go Back... *continued from page 5*

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So my understanding this year makes me realize that Holy Week itself is a ritual or sacrament of transformation for each of us into a greater commitment to our individual discipleship. Each time we experience the ritual of a sacrament we are drawn deeper into our own personal transformation and into the transformation of our community. I don't know exactly what the nature of my transformation is, but I feel I am being called to a deeper commitment to the way. I believe God is urging me to greater maturity in my own consciousness and my own spirit.

We can't predict what will happen to us as disciples in Holy Week. We have to surrender in faith.

Disciples can't go back to their usual lives. ■

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community in darkness breaking forth into joy and resurrection at the Easter Vigil.

I felt different on Easter morning, when the world came to us. Because during Holy Week we had been offered (and had accepted) many different opportunities to access our own emotions through active participation and reflection on an ancient story's resonance in our present-day lives, it seemed to me that we had something broader and deeper to offer those who worshipped here with us on Easter—and that many of them felt it.

These two types of potential—inner and outward—feel like widening circles from a pebble tossed into a pond. Each of us is struggling to live, love, and eventually die, surrounded (one hopes) by a vibrant community committed to supporting each other in being all that we are meant to be, and also moving out to bring, with our blessed hands, our shared love, commitment and determination to the world—even the secular world with its scorn and its hunger for the things we've been talking about here. The Kingdom of God, here and now. But it's only possible through the grace at the very center that allows each of us to be broken open, in safety and in trust, and healed, renewed, transformed.

On Maundy Thursday, I sat in the chapel trying to talk to Jesus (neither easy nor natural for me) as Paul had suggested. Strangely, I kept seeing my grandmother in my mind. Finally I gave up and talked to her instead. I told her everything. I cried. And eventually—empty, unburdened, but feeling rather inadequate—I went home. The experience baffled me until after Easter, when, suddenly, I understood: grace comes in many forms, but its message is always the same: *unconditional love*. ■