



Cathedral Script

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Lots of Love: No Money, or a Short Visit to Honduras

by *Hugh Rowlinson.*

I have been to Honduras several times in the 90's and early 00's working for the South American Mission Society (SAMS Canada). However, I felt I was too old to go again by myself. Thus the announcement in last summer's SAMS News that two colleagues were to lead a short "pilgrimage" this February seemed to me a gift from heaven, and I signed on with a friend, Bob Burns, from my summer church, St. James, Orillia. We returned last week, and it was indeed such a gift!

The mission in El Paraiso, the southern province of Honduras was started by a Canadian in the early 90's, but has been run by Hondurans for the past ten years. It has grown rapidly, and so we worked hard, visiting 20 parishes and 3 offices in six days, but we felt blessed both spiritually and physically (Isaiah 40.31). I, at least, felt 20 years younger! We saw good things and bad, but both were over-shadowed by the love and enthusiasm of the Honduran Anglicans. I think I had more hugs in a week than I normally get in a month! Worst was the poverty, particularly in the remoter rural areas, but also in the city slums. In poorer areas the average income is 70c US/person/day. The good news is that the Church is doing something about it, setting up Credit Unions in the smaller towns, both to encourage saving and to give small loans to people starting little businesses. They have also set up a social service organization (under the acronym AANGLIDESH) partly to advise such businesses, but also to work on clean water, sewage and other health problems. All this is good, and merits our support in prayer and in cash.

We visited in three deaneries, and the deans thereof each kindly spent two days travelling with us. The Church is expanding, largely by setting up new missions in small towns and villages. They start as house churches, but all are enthusiastic to build a "proper" church, for which there is usually little money. The greatest need, and all three Deans agreed on this, is for funds to pay the pastors and help their education. SAMS at present supports, in whole or in part, seven of them but there are as many more with little or no support. We heard

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Above: "I am the vine, you are the branches" © Ade Bethune, used by permission of the College of St. Catherine, Minneapolis and St. Paul. Ade Bethune was an early associate of Dorothy Day; her woodcuts frequently appeared in *The Catholic Worker*.

heart-rending stories of pastors travelling many hours by bus and foot to remote parishes, with essentially no money to pay them.

That all sounds very gloomy, but in fact, with the love and enthusiasm of the people, we had a lot of fun. Nowhere in Canada have I arrived at a church and the dean and the incumbent have picked up their guitars and given us an impromptu concert! My colleague Eva (of Belleville) had done a marvellous job of making arrangements, and her husband Dick drove impeccably over awful roads. Uniquely, in my experience of Honduras, not a thing went wrong! Well, only one. St. James has supported 12 students in high school for the past four years and we were to meet them, but didn't.



However everyone agreed that such education support is a real need. Overall it was a wonderful and uplifting trip. We prayed with a lot, sang with some, ate all that was set before us, and ended up encouraged and refreshed. As all Muslims are supposed to visit Mecca once in a lifetime, I propose that all Anglicans should visit a church in a less-developed country at least once! This Pilgrimage is strongly recommended as is the Cuba visit by Cathedral members in May. If you'd like more information on SAMS and Honduras, the website is www.samsCanada.ca ❖

An impromptu concert: Bob Burns, Rafael (priest), Hugh and Dagoberto (Dean).

The following reflections were sent for our newsletter and the benefit of Christ Church Cathedral parishioners by Bishop Nerva of the Diocese of Cuba, at the request of Rev. Joyce Sanchez

NOTES FROM THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

Rt. Rev. Nerva Cot Aguilera

There could not have been a better beginning to the Lambeth Conference, held in England from July 18 to August 4, 2008, than the three-day retreat in Canterbury Cathedral, personally directed by His Grace the Archbishop Rowan Williams, a spiritual giant who wisely issued a clear call for mutual understanding and the strengthening of the Anglican Communion. By their response to his call, those present would fulfill their mission as bishops to become instruments of unity, faithful to the apostolic succession, watching over each and every one of God's sons and daughters, and sensitive to the call of the Holy Spirit to be a church family in the overall and specific context of each participant.

The opening ceremony, attended by more than 620 bishops, began with a Eucharistic service written for the occasion in Canterbury Cathedral, where our spouses were already renewing their acquaintance inside. It was very impressive to hear the Cathedral bells ringing out their welcome and to watch the long procession of all the bishops in their red shirts.

In the days that followed, the early morning celebrations of the Eucharist, led by bishops from various parts of the world, each in his or her own language, offered a perspective on the history and activities of each diocese and provided an opportunity to join with us in the music of Cuba and Latin America at the giving of the Peace.

Bible study was held in small groups of ten people each, an environment which provided much richer opportunities for participation than the larger events.

These study sessions were spread around in various rooms and buildings of the University of Kent, where we were staying.

The topic of study was St. John's Gospel from the perspective of "I Am" ... the Word, the Light, the Living Water, the Bread of Life, the Way, the Good Shepherd, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, etc. Each

of us approached this Gospel from our own lived experiences and pastoral practices in our own context.

Another extraordinary highlight of the conference were the discussions in the Indaba groups, where about 50 people would share, in an atmosphere of fellowship and respect, their various perspectives on a wide range of topics, including poverty in the world, injustice, violence, Biblical interpretation, environmental pollution, the influence of globalization, missionary activities, interfaith dialogue, and regional jurisdiction and authority. ❖

BOOK NOTES

by Duncan Shaddick

If you have only a slight interest in economics but would like to know more, I highly recommend *Economics For Everyone* by Jim Stanford who is the Chief Economist with the Canadian Auto Worker's Union and writes a column for the *Globe & Mail*. He has the gift of simplification without going overboard and also presents capitalism as it is and more importantly, how it might evolve.



Cultural Amnesia - Necessary Memories from Culture & the Arts by Clive James, the Australian born, Sydney and Cambridge educated and London resident is a 900 page book containing roughly 100 potted biographies of important people from the last 500 years or so. They are mainly but not

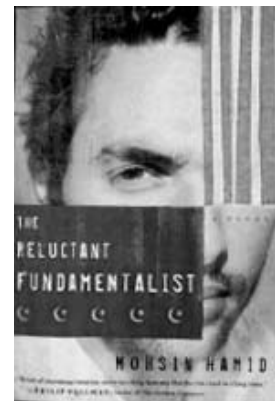
exclusively intellectuals but James has read many of the non-English subjects in their original language and has penetrating comments to make. Not a book to be read straight through but great for dipping into.

My final non-fiction selection is *The Rest is Noise - Listening to the Twentieth Century* by Alex Ross, music critic for the *New Yorker*. An award winning book, it is a survey of music of the last 100 years, beautifully written by an obvious music lover who never talks down to his readers but is able to communicate his enthusiasms.

Snow by Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish Nobel prize winner in Literature is set in Kars, in north-eastern Turkey in the recent past. It is a political thriller while also examining different aspects of life in present day Turkey.

Mira Stout, the author of *One Thousand Chestnut Trees* is half Korean and half American and her immensely enjoyable novel is set in Korea between 1910 when the Japanese first occupied the country and 1945 when the war ended and Korea was freed for a few years. The story is told from the viewpoint of various family members and gives a warm picture of Korean family life and culture while not down playing the brutality of the Japanese occupiers.

Yet another Asian novel is *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid who has a US business degree, worked in New York for several years but eventually (after 9/11) returned to his home town of Lahore, Pakistan. The novel takes the form of an extended monologue as the central character, with a background similar to the author's, talks through the afternoon and into the evening with a local man in a Lahore restaurant.



My final novel is completely different. *The Custom of the Country* by Edith Wharton is regarded by some as her best book. Originally published in 1913 it tells of a socially ambitious young woman who persuades her nouveau riche parents to move from the west where the money was made to New York and her adventures there in society. A very unsympathetic central character but a gripping novel. ❖

10 March 09

A REVIEW OF DENIS VILLENEUVE'S FILM **POLYTECHNIQUE**

By Bill Converse

Polytechnique is a dramatized account of the Montréal massacre that killed fourteen young women, all of them engineering students, at the École Polytechnique on December 6, 1989. The film is a work of fiction based on the actual event. It was the idea of Karine Vanasse who began developing the project in 2005. Vanasse (*Ma fille, mon ange; October 1970*) is the associate producer and plays the role of one of the students in the drama. Denis Villeneuve (*Maelstrom* and *The Next Floor*) is the director. The film belongs to the popular realist narrative genre of cinematography.

The drama is seen through the eyes of three students: Valérie (Karine Vanasse), her friend and roommate, Stéphanie (Evelyne Brochu), and Jean-François (Sébastien Huberdeau), a friend of Valérie, who attempts unsuccessfully to save the women's lives. These are composite characters. There is little or no character development. At the end of the film the names of the fourteen victims appear on the screen, together with the name of Sarto Blais, a male student who tried to help the critically wounded women. Marc Lépine is never mentioned by name. In the credits he is simply referred to as *le tueur*.

The appearance of this film twenty years after the event when the survivors are now middle-aged and their parents are seniors has sparked considerable controversy in the French media. The Polytechnique massacre still resonates in Québec. It is a very sensitive topic that can arouse strong reactions.

La Press (January 28) offered two viewpoints, "*Polytechnique: Le voir ou pas?*" Nathalie Petrowski maintained that this was definitely a film to see: it breaks the silence and shatters the taboos surrounding the subject. Yves Boisvert countered that this was definitely not a film to see: we have already been there and do not need to revisit it. His reaction was quite visceral, using words like *frisson* and *nausée* to express his obvious disgust at the project.

The weekend *Le Devoir* (January 31/February 1) had three articles devoted to the film. Odile Tremblay

wrote the lead article, "*Polytechnique au Cinéma: Explorer nos parts d'ombre.*" She also contributed an article to the dossier on the film, "*Filmer la mémoire ou laisser tomber?*" The third article, "*Devant l'objet,*" was written by Stéphane Baillargeon who asked whether art can offer some consolation.

No one disputes the right of artists to choose their subjects or how they treat them. The École Polytechnique massacre is certainly a suitable subject for a feature-length film. The fictional genre is also appropriate. *Polytechnique* allows Québécois to begin talking openly about a subject that has for too long been off limits. As Lise Bissonnette noted at the time, with the Montréal massacre Québec lost its innocence. The event rudely shattered the illusion that social revolutions in Québec are always tranquil. The fact that the shootings occurred at one of Québec's most prestigious institutions of higher education, the École Polytechnique de l'Université de Montréal, only made matters worse. The Polytechnique killings were the first in Montréal. They occurred before the shootings at Concordia University (1992) and Dawson College (2006).

In the press conference following the prerelease screening of the film, Denis Villeneuve parked further controversy by asserting that the massacre could only have taken place in Québec, an advanced society where women have achieved equality with men. Villeneuve contended that men coming from more traditional societies where gender roles are fixed find the freedom that women enjoy in modern Western societies, like Québec, very threatening. This makes them fearful and causes rage that can lead to violence.

This thesis is certainly debatable. Marc Lépine was born in Montréal of mixed ancestry. His father was Algérien and his mother was Québécoise. He legally adopted his mother's maiden name when he was fourteen, after his parents had divorced. His original name was Gamil Rodrigue Liess Gharbi. The thesis also fails to explain the level of domestic violence here or the recent incidents in which estranged parents (both women and men) have murdered their own children.

Any comparison of this film with Michael Moore's documentary *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) should

be resisted. Villeneuve reportedly compared *Polytechnique* to Gus Van Sant's *Elephant* (2003). However, *Polytechnique* is conceived as a war film: "Pour moi, c'est un film de guerre." It opens with the sound of gunshots. The actual shootings are shown twice in real time from different perspectives.

As in actual warfare, there are both direct and indirect victims. The male engineering student Sarto Blais who tried to save the women later became so despondent that he took his own life. Nadia Gharbi, Marc Lépine's sister, died from a drug overdose. Monique Lépine, Marc's mother, has written about her own protracted ordeal in a recently published book: Monique Lépine and Harold Gagné, *Aftermath* (2008).

Villeneuve's decision to present the film in black and white was a good one artistically. It provides a sense of distance. The dead and dying students are shown lying on the floor in black pools of blood. The contrast between the dark happenings taking place inside the building and the white winter landscape outside is stark. There is the further contrast between the fluorescent lighting inside and the natural light outside. The stillness of the landscape offers the only solace. There is no attempt to conceal the horror or to sanitize it. We are brought face to face with the darkness, *l'ombre de la guerre, l'ombre de la mort*. In my opinion, Villeneuve has succeeded admirably.

Pierre Gill's cinematography is splendid. His images of the winter landscape against which the dark tragedy unfolds are extraordinary: stark, beautiful and haunting. The camera gives us a close-up of a copy of Picasso's *Guernica* on the wall of the photocopying room. His marvellous eye for detail allows the camera to capture the statues of lions covered in snow, the angel with the outstretched arm, the single Christmas ornament hanging from the snow-covered branch of a tree, and the recycled church pew, with its carved cross, now used by students waiting in the reception area. The symbolism is subtle and poignant. Brendan Kelly in his review of the film for the Montreal Gazette (February 6) asked whether he was the only one to be disturbed by the stark beauty of the images. Perhaps the saying attributed to Dostoevsky, "Beauty will save the world," is not inappropriate here.

Reviewers have commented that *Polytechnique* lacks both psychological and sociological analysis. No attempt is made to explain the killer's motives. Maxim Gaudette, who plays the role of Marc Lépine, comes across as withdrawn and morose. The suicide note found on his body provides the only clue to his murderous act. It is a hateful anti-feminist diatribe, read aloud, in a chilling voice-over, at the outset of the film.

Villeneuve does not try to explain why the massacre occurred. This was a prudent decision. The autopsy report found no evidence of the presence of alcohol or drugs. Mental illness was also ruled out. There is no attempt to make sense of the event. In a secular society, such as Québec, where *laïcité* is the dominant ideology, there are no "grand narratives" (*les grands récits*) to give meaning to this tragedy. It is simply what Albert Camus called *l'absurde*.

Polytechnique lasts only seventy-six minutes. This is short for a feature film. However, the intensity of the drama and the horrific action it presents make it seem longer. The screenplay was written by Jacques Davidts. Benoît Charest composed the original music.

The film cost \$6.1 million. Téléfilm Canada provided \$3.1 million. The question has been raised whether the Montréal massacre is a suitable subject for a commercial venture. It is too early to know whether the film will be a success. Early box office receipts were lower than those for *Babine*.

Polytechnique is an important but deeply disturbing film. It is very demanding emotionally. The survivors and the families of the victims probably should not see it. Also it should not be seen alone. I recommend the film but with the proviso that it is extremely violent.

Polytechnique premiered in Montréal on February 2. It was released for the general public on February 6. The film was shot simultaneously in French and English. I saw both versions. ❖

February 24, 2009

BUILDING COMMUNITY

HOSPITALITY: FROM HOSTIS TO HOSPIS

by Krish Dasgupta

At the last Forum meeting we discussed “Building Community” at the Cathedral. Many ideas were exchanged as we explored how to grow and sustain our community in the future.

One answer for how to build a growing community is through sincerely welcoming the newcomers amongst us. The practice of hospitality calls for us to make time for the stranger -- and time, in our society, is something harder for us to part with than alms or money.

For me, hospitality is something that defines a community and often indicates its health. *Hospitalité* in French means “*le sens d’accueil*” or “knowing how to welcome”. As a community we can always look at the way we welcome the stranger among us and see ways to improve. We also need to understand how we reach out to the newcomer and to each other at an individual level.

Hospitality should not be confused with entertaining, which we tend to reserve for people who are similar to us. Hospitality doesn’t require the guest be like us or that he share our notions of etiquette. Henri Nouwen in “Reaching Out” suggests that we should not limit hospitality to its literal sense, but embrace it as a fundamental attitude towards our fellow human being. He continues to say that our vocation is to convert the *hostis* (the stranger or enemy) into *hospis*, the guest.

This is hard to practice as it requires us to take time and demands active participation. It means letting go of what is familiar to us, and putting ourselves in the mindset of the other to allow us to create a “space” which enables the stranger to be herself in our presence. Hospitality is the recognition of the sacredness of stranger and the gifts he brings by his presence.

Hospitality as Inheritance

Ancient cultures have always placed an importance in recognizing the special gift that the stranger brings. In Hinduism one says “*athithi devo bhava*” or the “guest is God.” As a child I used to wonder why the beggars who turned up at my grandmother’s doorstep were never turned away. There were always provisions of rice and lentils kept aside in a separate cupboard for them. He or she was always given a place to sit in the shade of a tree, water to drink accompanied with a piece of sugar candy at first.

I was told by a friend that in Quebec among French Canadians the tradition was always to lay an extra place at the dinner table for the unknown and unexpected guest. Rublev’s icon of the Trinity (a copy of which hangs in our Chapel) tells us this story too. In the midst of parched desert landscape, Abraham welcomed the three visitors with the words “not by chance have you come my way”. The stranger perhaps calls to us to step out of our own parched lives and familiar practices, and to open ourselves to new possibilities.

I try and remember these words as much as I can for whatever happens in my life but the lesson I draw most from this is the importance of remaining “open and ready” for the new at all times, and making time for people.

We learn this reluctantly, often because of our own neediness. As a child, it irked me that my father always took time to talk to people and unflinchingly cancelled personal appointments if any unexpected guest arrived at the home!

A Personal Story

My own story of starting out as a new immigrant in Montreal is an account of kindness I received from strangers as much as it is about openness on my part to welcome the unknown in to my life.

As a brand new immigrant, I knew no one in the city when I arrived. I remember, at the end of a long first day, wanting only to hear the consoling words of the Nunc *Dimmitis* and so I came to the Cathedral. After Evensong, Marjory Sharp on the first day, and then Suzanne Cross the next day came up to introduce themselves and ask me my name. These were perhaps the first words directed to me in those first days in Canada.

Being asked my name suddenly lifted me up from the state of utter anonymity and inconsequence. It takes courage to walk up to a stranger, introduce oneself and ask their name, yet we don’t realize the impact this simple act may have for the other.

Sometimes we seem more concerned with allowing people their space, respecting their privacy, and we hesitate to approach the guest, or ask after fellow parishioners when we don’t see them anymore in fear of appearing to be nosy. Sometimes we don’t even know each other’s names. But if we are a community centered around the Eucharist; and if we can share our deepest desires and secrets in common supplication during mass, should we not be able to approach the other, offer

our hand and ask their name? Will the Holy Spirit not be present with us when we reach out to the other?

There are admittedly different personality types – extroverts and introverts – as Myers-Briggs attests. It is not easy for everyone to be outgoing, and certainly some shy strangers become uncomfortable when they receive too much attention. Sensitivity toward strangers is something that we learn with practice, and the cathedral, with its many visitors, is a good place for that! I personally would rather come across as imposing myself on someone than to let the other person feel neglected and unimportant.

The German word for hospitality is “*gastfreundlichkeit*” and in Dutch it is “*gastvrijheid*”. In German, hospitality means friendship for the guest and in Dutch; the freedom of the guest. Nouwen understands this as “offering friendship without binding the guest and freedom without leaving them alone...”

Learning to Receive as well as to Give

Hospitality is not only reaching out to the stranger but also openness to accepting what the other has to offer us. It requires us to be receptive to the gifts brought to us by the unknown.

A couple of years ago during the Sunday service in Lent, we learnt about the consequences of HIV in South Africa. We heard about a wonderful initiative in which mothers suffering from HIV were encouraged to leave “memory boxes” for their children before they died, and their preparation for this. We broke up in groups afterwards to discuss what we could do as a church to help. I recall thinking later that the whole focus of our discussion was to alleviate the plight of the people and yet perhaps we didn’t realize that these women too had a gift to offer us healthier, wealthier individuals: how to learn to bear our own burdens with grace and dignity.

True hospitality happens when one is aware of one’s own poverty and need of the other. It is an act of humility and not charity. It is an acknowledgement of the need of the other and therefore being able to receive is an important part of the equation of hospitality too. Here I think of the beautiful image of Jesus knocking on the door, waiting patiently for us to have the room to let him in (*this page, above*).

It is only when we are able to receive from the other and enter into a genuine relationship that a community comes alive, and we as individuals grow. We step beyond



our fears of the unknown and continue to make the hostis into hospis, and ultimately into brother and sister.

To conclude, I would like to share a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, a mentor and a friend:

Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.

I am uneasy at heart when I have to leave my accustomed shelter; I forget that there abides the old in the new, and that there also Thou abidest.

Through birth and death, in this world or in others, wherever Thou ledest me it is

thou, the same, the one companion of my endless life who ever linkest my heart with bonds of joy to the unfamiliar.

When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the one in the play of the many.

LIVING HISTORY FOR THE CATHEDRAL'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY - MORE STORIES PLEASE!

by Elizabeth Robertson

I've been on the story search for a few weeks now and it's going very well. People are coming up to me and handing me photos, anecdotes and names of people I should speak to. Or telling me about the firsts—I was the first woman warden, I was the first woman sidesman, the first time I sang in the choir... I've also learned about people who meant a lot to the community who are no longer with us. People like Stan, Alice, the teddy bear lady... Mostly people have been coming up to me and telling me “about the time when...” Those are the moments I curse myself for not having my microphone and recorder on me. But that will come soon. So all of you people who have done that, watch out—I'll be coming after you with technology soon!

However, I'm still on the lookout for new stories. And now there are a few ways you can share them. You can write your stories out and give them to me, or you can let me know you have a story and I will record you telling

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Above: “The Light of the World” by William Holman Hunt, 1851-53 (Oxford University)

MUSIC NOTES

As we write, your choir is busy preparing a large folder-full of music for Holy Week and Easter, including a beautiful mass setting by Gabrieli for double choir and brass for Easter morning, and works representing the entire range of the liturgical music tradition for the many Holy Week observances: Palm Sunday, Tenebrae (Wednesday evening), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Saturday evening Easter Vigil.

Right after Easter, we plan to start preparing to make a new CD to mark the cathedral's 150th anniversary; that recording will include some of the music that has been specially composed for the cathedral choirs.

Later this spring, we expect a visit from the choir of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, NYC, and this summer plans are afoot (and tapping!) for a "jazz mass mini tour" in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. (Our own jazz mass will be on the official Montreal Jazz Fest schedule this year.)

We feel incredibly fortunate to be able to sustain this program and offer music to God, to you, and to the visitors who come to the cathedral; thank you for your support of the music program. ❖

E-MAIL UPDATES: Eva reminds us that e-mail is a good way to keep in touch with the cathedral. Those whose correct e-mail address we have will receive news such as Forum Agenda & Minutes, reminders for events like parish dinners, concerts, or special services. And to keep mailing costs down, we'd like to know if you prefer to receive Script as a PDF. Please keep us updated and send your e-mail address to the church office at cathoff@bellnet.ca.

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it. Or, (and this is the new and exciting part) you can post them directly on the new cathedral website. Jane Aitkens has designed a beautiful, easy-to-use portal. Just go to the main page at www.montrealcathedral.ca, scroll down to the bottom and you'll see the link "Cathedral stories".

Some of you have told me you don't have any stories to tell. Or that you haven't been coming to the cathedral for very long so you don't to have anything to share. I respectfully disagree. I think everyone here has a story. I usually sit at the back of the church, and these days when I look at all of you sitting in the pews I find myself asking two questions: "What brought you to the cathedral?" and "Why have you stayed?" Two questions that sound simple, but say a lot about our faith and our relationship to this church. Imagine if we heard everyone's answer to these questions. What an interesting portrait of our parish that would be. ❖



A view of the Honduran landscape, by Hugh Rowlinson - see Hugh's article on his recent travels, beginning on page 1