

February 2023 **Franciscan Voice Canada** blog  
by Andrew Conradi, ofs; JPIC & [Laudato si' Animator](#)



*I acknowledge and thank the Lkwungen People for allowing me to live, pray, work, and play on their lands. I am deeply sorry for the injustices inflicted upon the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Turtle Island by the complicity of Governments & settlers, including the Catholic Church, in the colonialism inherent in the Indian Act and Residential Schools including racism, neglect, many forms of abuse & cultural genocide. I commit to work for truth, healing and reconciliation.*

## 1. PRAYER



Ilia Delio, OSF



Nina Hirlaender, OFS

I, who am neither a theologian nor scientist, have just finished reading Ilia Delio's *The Hours of The Universe - Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey* and listening to podcasts on Mystical Prayer by Nina Hirlaender. I immediately recalled Ilia Delio's *Franciscan Prayer* in which on p24 she mentioned Bonaventure's 13 steps to descend into ourselves. I'll just mention steps 1, 2, 3 & 12. They came to me because Delio mentions Meister Eckhardt in *The Hours* p25: "He who knows himself knows all things." Not sure that applies to me, at least not yet!

Bonaventure's steps: 1. return to yourself; 2. enter into your heart; 3. ponder what you were, are, should have been called to be; & 12. lack of self-knowledge and failure to appreciate one's own worth makes for faulty judgement in all other matters.

Nina's podcasts are very interesting, personal and informative and I highly recommend them. George and I thought it worth promoting them and we have included her link to the podcasts called *Holy Rebels*. The title reflects the rebellious spiritedness of the saints and those who dare venture into a direct relationship with the Mystery of God.

Here is a link to *Holy Rebels* that will automatically connect Apple users to Apple Podcasts and Android users to Spotify:

<https://link.chtbl.com/fZG3W7WC>

Nina tells us of the three stages of mystical prayer: purgative (purge ourselves of sinful desires); illuminative (enlightenment/discernment of God's desires) and unitive (union with God).

There is frequent confusion about meditation vs contemplation. Andrew's understanding is that meditation is focused on concrete matters e.g. JPIC issues, while contemplation is union with God in silent unfocused prayer e.g. in the "Cloud of Unknowing."

Andrew's suggestion for a meditation: in *The Hours* p xvi Delio writes: "Simply put, we cannot speak of God apart from human evolution, an idea that led Teilhard [de Chardin] to state that God and world form a complementary pair. God and the world are entangled with one another to the extent that talk of God is impossible apart from talk about nature and creative change and talk of nature makes no sense apart from God. If a unified God-world relationship is the heart of theology, then theology cannot be done apart from modern science. Without science, theology can easily become idolatry."

This leads me, Andrew, to realise that scripture intuitively told us what science is revealing through quantum physics as here in Paul to the Colossians 3:11: "There is only Christ. He is everything and he is in everything." Reminds us of Daniel 3:57-81; the Canticle of the Creatures; and that early Franciscan friars were scientists e.g. "Robert Grossteste, a thirteenth century Oxford theologian, described the beginning of all physical life from light. One of his major works, *De Luce*, begins with God's creation, a single point of light, which, through expansion and extension, evoked the entire physical order into existence." (Delio, *The Hours*, p3)!

Here is some modern science: "Remember, light is a manifestation of electromagnetic force. Matter is made up of charged particles due to the nature of atoms, being composed of a positively charged nucleus surrounded by electrons that are in motion. ... But light is also a particle - its particle is called a photon and each photon carries a packet of energy that is proportional to the frequency. Matter can absorb the energy from a photon. ..." Is this what Delio called "the wondrous reality of wave-particle duality"? (p7).

As I wrote in 2013 in *Understanding JPIC*: "3.3.27.b. Another thing to remember is that in 1918 the President of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Dr Albert Durrant Watson, delivered a speech with the phrase "our bodies are made of star-stuff", and he seemed to be reaching for a quasi-spiritual interpretation for this fact." Watson is the first on record to have said we are made of "star-stuff", or "stardust" as others later called it.

So if, God created the cosmos, which quantum physics tells us began composed of infinitesimal small particles; and since matter, energy and light are all entangled particles; plus we humans are made of star-stuff or dust particles, then if God is love, very surely the cosmos and all creation, including us, was made by love! N.B. the very word *human* comes from Latin *humus* i.e. soil which is also made from star-stuff.

Am I now finally starting to grasp reality? I should have known because I recall St Angela of Foligno, Franciscan tertiary (i.e. now OFS) who said she: "beheld and comprehended the whole of creation ... and my soul in an excess of wonder cried out:

This world is pregnant with God.” Also in *Laudato si’* (77) Pope Francis wrote: “God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things.”

## 2. SHARE LENT 2023

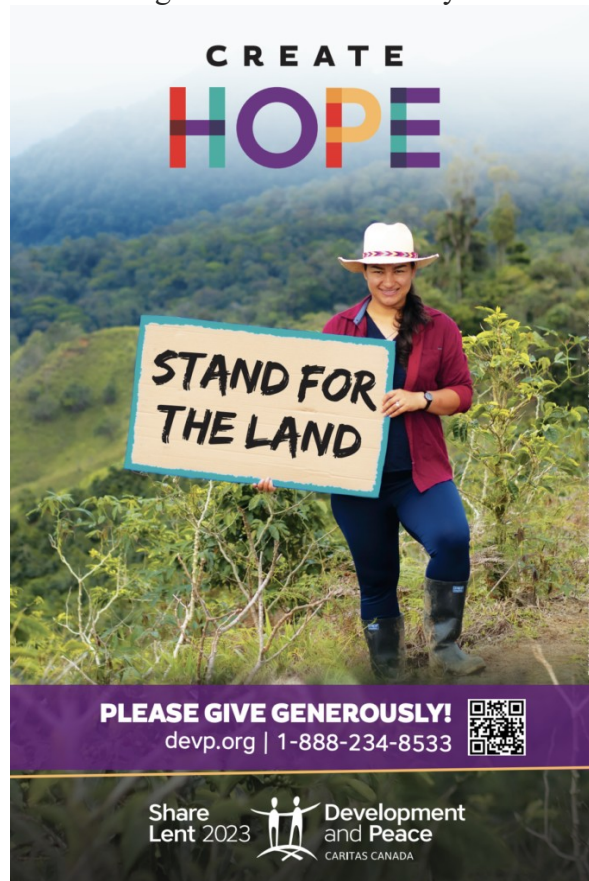
As background let me say that Robert Calderisi, a former director of the World Bank and Montréal Loyola College Rhodes scholar wrote in The New York Times, 29 Dec 2013: “As a result of its work in basic health and education — and despite its obtuse views on birth control — in the last 50 years the [RC] church has probably lifted more people out of poverty than any other civic institution in history.”

D&P’s last campaign was about human and environmental rights and due diligence. As of 13 Jan 2023 **Over 27,000 people** signed this [petition for due diligence legislation](#). Our members met and presented the campaign and petition to **43 Members of Parliament**, actually now 44 MPs, because my parish Social Eco Justice Ministry met our MP Alistair MacGregor (NDP) on 27 January!) who also promised to present the petition. In 2021 and 2022, several MPs presented the petition in the House of Commons ([watch the recordings](#)).

**Share Lent** is an annual highlight for D&P. It is when the bishops of Canada encourage the faithful to **give** to Development and Peace, especially through the collection on Solidarity Sunday, the fifth Sunday of Lent.

This Lent, let us walk **in solidarity** with our sisters and brothers in the Global South to **Create Hope**, and **Stand for the Land**.

**Join us** and bring Share Lent to life in your community!



CREATE  
HOPE

STAND FOR  
THE LAND

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Share  
Lent 2023

Development  
and Peace  
CARITAS CANADA

**An invitation to *Create Hope***  
**Message from Bishop Raymond Poisson, CCCB President**

“Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In October 2022, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, the official international solidarity organization of the Catholic Church in Canada, celebrated 55 years of solidarity. It has therefore been 55 years since we, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, founded this visionary organization that aspires to build a better world. For fifty-five years, human dignity and social justice have been at the heart of its projects and programs. For 55 years, this social movement, supported by the Catholic community in Canada, has been working for justice and peace, inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, especially the preferential option for the poor.

**We are proud of the struggles for social change that the organization has supported over the years and look forward to continuing our commitment in the years to come.**

... to *Create Hope*, we are called upon to *Stand for the Land*. Why? Because around the world, many communities desperately want to protect their land, a source of life and hope. We'll show our solidarity with those who defend the lands, waters and forests that sustain them, as well as the culture, history and identity that define them. Let's *Stand for the Land* with them to secure their future in the face of threats such as agribusiness, mining, climate change and conflict. How can we stand in solidarity with them?

1. **By giving generously to Share Lent** (on Solidarity Sunday, March 26, 2023, the 5th Sunday of Lent), in solidarity with communities in the Global South who are defending life and their land to ensure a future of justice, rights, dignity, respect, peace and harmony for their families.

2. **By learning about why it is important to *Stand for the Land* and joining the action in the fall**, to ensure that the voices of the poorest and most marginalized people in the Global South are heard and steps are taken to create change.

Therefore, I invite you to *Create Hope* by supporting Development and Peace's *Stand for the Land* campaign. Give generously, get involved in your community, be the hands and feet of Christ in the world: “[...] let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).”

Fraternally in our Lord,

+ Raymond Poisson

Bishop of Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier

President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops ”

Source: [https://www.devp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CECC\\_Campagne-2023\\_EN.pdf](https://www.devp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CECC_Campagne-2023_EN.pdf)

If it is not too late to order resources you can print your own copy of this letter here  
<https://www.devp.org/en/campaign/stand-for-the-land/resources/>

### **3. SURVIVAL OF THE RICHEST: HOW WE MUST TAX THE SUPER-RICH NOW TO FIGHT INEQUALITY**

We are living through an unprecedented moment of multiple crises. Tens of millions more people are facing hunger. Hundreds of millions more face impossible rises in the cost of basic goods or heating their homes.

Climate breakdown is crippling economies and seeing droughts, cyclones and floods force people from their homes.

Millions are still reeling from the continuing impact of COVID-19, which has already killed over 20 million people. Poverty has increased for the first time in 25 years. At the same time, these multiple crises all have winners. The very richest have become dramatically richer and corporate profits have hit record highs, driving an explosion of inequality.

Read more: **Oxfam Policy Paper**, 16 January 2023

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/survival-richest>

### **4. “WONDER AND AWE: HOW ECO- SPIRITUALITY CAN INSPIRE US IN 2023”**



Laudato Si Action Platform

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Picef3-pjLU>

This engaging conversation with Dr. Erin Lothes, author of *Inspired Sustainability: Planting Seeds for Action* and Senior Manager of the Laudato Si' Animators program, explores how: -A sense of wonder and awe can support your concrete commitments to integral ecology -Ecospirituality connects you and your Catholic faith with the environment -Engaging your head, heart, and hands will make you a better practitioner of environmental sustainability -To prayerfully discern your own personal Laudato Si' Action Platform goals for the upcoming year.

### **5. UKRAINIAN MAJOR ARCHBISHOP SHEVCHUK**



against Orthodox ban

The head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, has warned against moves by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government to outlaw Orthodox communities linked to Moscow, and urged his countrymen to "give Russians a chance to repent."

The church leader's comments circulated after legislation was tabled Jan. 19 by Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal in Kyiv's Verkhovna Rada parliament to prohibit "activities by religious organizations" affiliated with centers "in a state carrying out armed aggression against Ukraine."

The archbishop told the online news outlet Ukrainska Pravda the state had a right to ensure national security by identifying and acting against "dangerous traitors."

However, he cautioned that banning the Moscow-affiliated Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) also could give it "the palm of martyrdom," and said the natural instinct of "righteous anger" needed "transforming and framing."

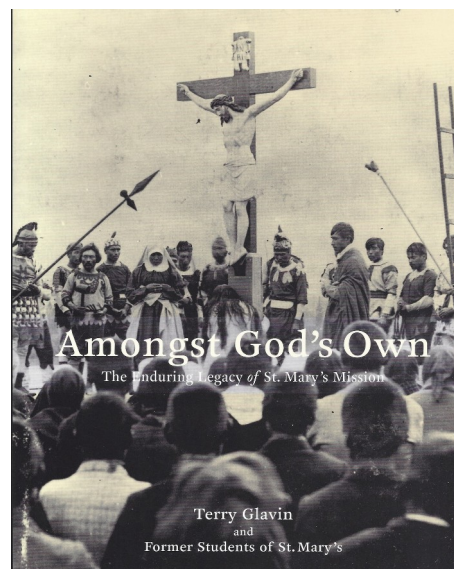
"A church isn't just a religious structure, an organization with a charter, leader and center -- it's also people with constitutional rights, and while there are people in Ukraine oriented toward Moscow's Orthodoxy, this church will exist even if it's illegal under state law," Archbishop Shevchuk said.

"You shouldn't be persecuted for belonging to some church structure, but for crimes against our country, and here we are all equal. ... The point is that our northern neighbour, who is killing us today, shouldn't be able to use any church for his political ends."

Read more:

[https://www.catholicregister.org/home/international/item/35188-ukrainian-catholic-leader-warns-against-orthodox-ban?mc\\_cid=9d062f6b13&mc\\_eid=b664ffdb59](https://www.catholicregister.org/home/international/item/35188-ukrainian-catholic-leader-warns-against-orthodox-ban?mc_cid=9d062f6b13&mc_eid=b664ffdb59)

## 6. RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS



2002

The following article is worth reading (also the video linked in the newsletter).

The following excerpts are from this 14 December 2022 article:

<https://bccatholic.ca/news/catholic-van/acclaimed-residential-school-history-gets-second-printing-thanks-to-reconciliation-funding>

Acclaimed residential school history gets second [or third?] printing thanks to reconciliation funding. According to publisher Longhouse it is sold out and third printing funding is being sought.

The national Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is awarding the Fraser Valley Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre a \$54,225 grant so it can update, reprint, and distribute the innovative, Indigenous-led St. Mary's history by B.C. writer Terry Glavin in 2002, *Amongst God's Own: The Enduring Legacy of St. Mary's Mission* [BC].

Reviewers of the book praised author Terry Glavin for giving voice to 35 former students, most of whom attended the school in the 1940s and '50s, and for presenting a comprehensive, balanced, and revealing portrait of an Indian residential school, a portrait that was neither entirely negative nor entirely positive.

"I don't think any of the histories that have been written about the residential schools so far tell the whole story. There is no balance," Bill Williams, a former St. Mary's student, wrote in the book's foreword. "But in Glavin's work, it is there. I feel it is very important to get this point of view across." Williams himself wrote that his experiences were mainly positive.

The new edition of the book will be retitled *St. Mary's: The Legacy of an Indian Residential School*. It will include some new content, including photographs recently made public by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, which operated the school from the time of its establishment in 1863 to its closing in 1984.

Author Glavin said in an interview he recognizes that, in giving voice to former students whose experiences were varied, his book does not align with the prevailing narrative that everyone who attended an Indian Residential Schools had only terrible experiences. He pointed out that while some students had "utterly horrific" experiences, others' encounters were "utterly benign and even delightful" and the two groups "did not dispute one another's stories."

Glavin said his concern has long been "that we not force upon [the former students] a narrative paradigm that either dismisses residential schools in their entirety as an abominable genocidal project, or upholds the residential schools as some sort of benign civilizing mission. Just let people talk, for God's sake. Let Indigenous people tell their own stories."

Observers have pointed out that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission itself, in its 244-page "The Survivors Speak" report, included a four-page section entitled "Warm memories." As well, the commission's "Missing Children and Unmarked Burials" report

notes, “Many students had positive memories of their experience of residential schools and acknowledge the skills they acquired, the beneficial aspects of the recreational and sporting activities in which they engaged, and the friendships they made.”

“This book is about a terrible story,” Glavin writes in the 2002 introduction. “It is a story that involves great suffering, betrayal, love, sacrifice, loss, and redemption. This book is also about a wonderful story, a story that involves faith, memory, comfort, forgiveness, sorrow, and loyalty.” Of St. Mary’s, he concludes: “It was an evil place. It was a beautiful place.”

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission listed 12 students who died at the school over its 121-year life.

## **7. SYNOD**

### **Catholic Church must welcome all as equals to be truly 'synodal'**

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/16526/catholic-church-must-welcome-all-as-equals-to-be-truly-synodal->

600 laity and clerics representing Europe will gather for four days in Prague in early February, but only the 39 heads of bishops’ conferences will meet for the last two days.

“What affects all should be decided by all. Are these synods going to revert to the old and outdated model of bishops only? With only token representation of the laity?” (Colm Holmes of We Are Church Ireland)

The revised Code of Canon Law maintained the exclusion of the laity from exercising governance thereby making true co-responsibility impossible.

Sexual and spiritual abuse and the need for reform in the Church: the episcopate in Italy “stubbornly continues not really to want to investigate the real extent of the abuses”.

### **Enter USA’s Cardinal McElroy (for the American Continental Session which will include Canada)**

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/01/24/mcelroy-synodality-inclusion-244587>



“Reforming our own structures of exclusion will require a long pilgrimage of sustained prayer, reflection, dialogue and action—all of which should begin now. ... We must



examine the contradictions in a church of inclusion and shared belonging that have been identified by the voices of the people of God in our nation and discern in synodality a pathway for moving beyond them. ... An increasingly strong contradiction to the vision of a church of inclusion and shared belonging lies in the growth of polarization within the life of the church in the United States and the structures of exclusion that it breeds. ... This polarization is reflected in the schism so often present between the pro-life communities and justice-and-peace communities in our parishes and dioceses. It is found in the false divide between “Pope Francis Catholics” and “St. John Paul II Catholics.” It is found in the friction between Catholics who emphasize inclusion and others who perceive doctrinal infidelity in that inclusion. Even the Eucharist has been marred by this ideological polarization, in both the debates about the pre-conciliar liturgy and the conflicts over masking that roiled many parishes during the pandemic of the past several years. ... The call for the admission of women to priestly orders as an act of justice and a service to the church was voiced in virtually every region of our world church. At the same time, many women and men who participated in the synod favoured reserving the priesthood for men in keeping with the action of Christ and the history of the church. It is likely the synod will adopt this latter stance because of its rootedness in the theology and history of the church. ... Whichever position emerges from the synodal discernment on this question [women priests], the reality remains that the synodal dialogues have asked the church to move in two contradictory directions on this question. During the synodal process over the next two years, God will have to grace the church profoundly if we are to find reconciliation amid this contradiction.”

<https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/the-cat-s-out-of-the-bag-now-with-the-synod-on-synodality>

The synodal process on synodality for a synodal Church got a bit of a jolt last week when Cardinal Robert McElroy of San Diego let the cat out of the bag, or pulled back the curtain, or simply said aloud what many had suspected was afoot. He [argued](#) that the Synod on Synodality was exactly the right time to approve the ordination of women deacons, reconsider the ordination of women priests, set aside St. Paul’s scriptural teaching on not receiving Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin, and, at least for certain favoured sexual practices, abandon altogether the challenge of chastity.

McElroy is by far the most intelligent, articulate and well-educated — Stanford, Harvard, Berkeley, Gregorian — of the American cardinals that Pope Francis has created, so people [took note](#).

The NCR is obviously not in favour of the changes suggested by McElroy but to keep the *status quo* and so is Larry Chapp:

<https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2023/01/30/cardinal-mcelroys-grand-deception/>

A church divided indeed! “Where there is discord, let me bring union”! Where do you stand? How do you form your conscience? Result? *Status quo* or *ecclesia semper reformanda est*? Read the signs of the times? Is the Holy Spirit at work to reform the church or in favour of the *status quo* reactionaries?

I cannot speak for Ilia Delio, but reading *The Hours of The Universe - Reflections on God, Science, and the Human Journey*, I think she and I, and many others, are for reform. We live in interesting (and frightening) times!

Peace & joy, Andrew, ofs