



Roots & Wings

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of *Roots & Wings* for 2021. This publication, sent electronically free of charge to members of the Professional Society, appears quarterly. It contains regular features as indicated in the Contents table alongside.



Resurrection 2007

Jyoti Sahi (b. 1944)

CONTENTS

REFLECTION

Mystical Images for Our Religious Quest2

REFLECTION

Fire in the depths of the earth3

TALKING ABOUT RE (CPTD)

Framework for Early Years Spiritual Development5

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Five C's of Educating10

ARTISTS' CORNER

Jyoti Sahi.....14

WEBSITE

Greenfaith.....15

BOOK REVIEW

.....16

LOCAL NEWS

.....19

QUESTION (CPTD)22

Members are encouraged to send material for future editions. What might you send? Here are some examples:

- Lesson ideas or plans
- Reviews of useful materials such as books or websites
- News from your school's RE Department
- Short articles of interest to religious educators
- Adverts for RE posts in your school

REFLECTION

Mystical Images for Our Religious Quest

(Ron Rolheiser)



There are few things as powerful as a poetic image. The nation with the best poets will ultimately triumph because poetry is more powerful than armies. An army can beat a nation into submission, but only a poetic image can change a people's vision.

That's not an exaggeration. To offer a small example: Centuries ago, Leonardo da Vinci painted a picture of the Last Supper. No historian in the world would suggest that the actual Last Supper of Jesus looked anything like da Vinci's painting, but his image of the Last Supper has so branded and stamped itself into our universal consciousness that today we cannot not picture the Last Supper, except as he painted it.

With this in mind, I want to highlight two images from the Gospel of John, mystical images that we would do well to brand into our consciousness, like a da Vinci painting. They are images for the religious quest, for true pilgrimage, for discipleship.

Unlike the other Gospels, where Mary, the mother of Jesus, is presented as the ideal disciple, John's Gospel gives Mary a different role, that of being Eve, the mother of all creation. It then gives us two powerful images of discipleship, one male and one female: The Beloved Disciple and Mary of Magdala.

The Beloved Disciple, whom we commonly, though perhaps naively, identify with John himself, offers one image of what means to be a disciple of Jesus. John presents this figure in various guises, but all have this in common: The Beloved Disciple has a unique intimacy with Jesus. Perhaps the single most powerful picture of this is that

of the Beloved Disciple reclining at the Last Supper with his head on Jesus' breast.

What is contained in this image? This is a mystical image, of intimacy and of listening. Simply put, the image is this: If you place your ear on someone's chest, you can hear that person's heartbeat. The Beloved Disciple, then, is the person who is so intimate with Jesus that he or she hears his heartbeat and, from that perspective, looks out at the world. To be a disciple of Jesus is to have your ear attuned to his heartbeat as you gaze out into the world. For John, if you do this, you will always be at the right places, will always have the right perspective, and will always have the courage to do the right thing. You will also be driven by love.

And this, to be driven by love, is John's other mystical image for discipleship, the figure of Mary of Magdala.

John presents her as the restless, driven figure from the Song of Songs, a woman unable to sleep until she finds her soul mate. And, like the image of the Beloved Disciple reclining on Jesus' breast, it is an image of a unique intimacy.

To help grasp the strength of this image, it is helpful to first read the Song of Songs. Its early chapters, speaking through a woman's voice, present us with an image of an unconsummated, driven lover whose yearning for her soul mate relativizes everything else in her life. She has only one thing on her mind and in her heart, to find the one who can still her moral loneliness:

On my bed at night I sought my beloved, sought him but could not find him.

So I got up and went into the city; in the streets and in the squares, seeking my beloved.

I sought but could not find him!

I came upon the watchmen, those who go on their rounds in the city:

"Have you seen my beloved?"

Barely had I passed them when I found my beloved

I caught him, and would not let him go, not until I had brought him to my mother's house and to the very room and the bed where my mother had conceived me.

There are no images more intimate than these. And, for John, true discipleship is driven by precisely such yearning, both in terms of its earthly intensity and in terms of the depth of intimacy it desires.

But we rarely think like this religiously. Such language strikes us almost as sacrilegious, unfit for pious ears. The quest for God and the hunger for this kind of consummation form different categories, two

distinct worlds, inside of us. Our quest for discipleship and religion is emotionally all but completely divorced from our yearning to find a soul mate, divorced from our sexuality, and divorced from our fantasies, whatever they are, of what ultimately makes for consummation. For us, religion and our psycho-sexual world rarely, if ever, intersect at that level. Religion is understood as a duty we do, a categorical imperative that in our better moments we recognize as important, but it isn't something that drives us out on a Sunday morning, as it did Mary of Magdala, to restlessly prowl gardens, which we tend to call churches, looking for a God to fill an emptiness that we consider only emotional, psychological, and sexual.

http://ronrolheiser.com/mystical-images-for-our-religious-quest/#.X_VlzdgzblV



REFLECTION

Fire in the Depths of the Earth

Meditation for Pentecost

(Daniel O'Leary)



Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a power at work in a continually renewed universe, and is present in the innermost mystery of all things. Grace and science come together to offer a fuller picture of what is true: that God's love is embodied in

all humanity, and in the evolving world itself.

Breakthrough into new vistas is an essential dimension of Pentecost. This Sunday's Collect implores God to "fill now once more the hearts of believers", encouraging us to expand our horizons. Pentecost, for theologian Karl Rahner, is a vital "hour of courageous vision" in the history of the Church, when the Holy Spirit weaves new patterns out of the "interrelatedness of Creation and Incarnation".

A central path, for him, towards that expansion of the restless heart's horizon, concerns the currently popular question about the divine intention for the Incarnation - did Jesus come to atone for the sin of Adam and Eve, or would he have come anyway?

Beyond doctrinal debate, this is a crucial question with implications for every aspect of our lives, personal and universal. Is there a theology, people ask, other than one based on a fall/redemption supposition, that tells a different story – a story of original grace and beauty rather than of original sin?

By way of reply, theologians point to two schools of theology that are central to our present reflection. One is the familiar sin/redemption model with its basic themes of reparation and sacrifice. The other is called a theology of nature and grace. Creation, our earth, our bodies, our death, all we mean by the “natural”, “the secular”, are not the unfortunate results of what Blessed John Henry Newman called “some terrible aboriginal calamity”. On the contrary, they are all already graced, and carefully fashioned in the divine image.

But if there was no Fall, people ask, why then are we so sinful, so destructive, so evil? Theologians reply that the act of Creation in the very first place – involving time, space and free will – carries with it the need for redemption. Salvation is implicit in Creation itself.

To be human is to be wounded from the start, to be in need of completion. Love is what completes us. “We were already saved”, writes Richard Rohr OFM, “by the gaze from the manger.” The terrible death on the Cross is not about an atonement demanded by a punitive Father for one early original sin of disobedience; it reveals, rather, the astonishing love of God for a broken humanity, healing it and charting its course towards its blessed destiny. An orthodox theology of Creation holds that God, right from the beginning, desired to become human simply because, as St Thomas Aquinas put it, his infinite love needed to express itself outside itself (*bonum est diffusivum sui*) – first in Creation, then finally and fully revealed in Incarnation. And by virtue of solidarity and derivation, this love is embodied to a greater or lesser degree, in all of us and in the evolving world itself.

Being human does not mean being banished, fallen, cursed – a *massa damnata* as St Augustine put it – as if God’s original

dream for us was, at some stage, radically destroyed. Terrible things happen when mythical truth is confused with historical truth. Paradise was not lost in the past; Adam and Eve never existed on this planet; the Creator’s original blueprint was never destroyed by an actual “fall”.

If all of this is true – that the essential face of Creation, as we have it, has always carried the tender look of love rather than the sinister shape of sin – then other intrinsically connected issues to do with the vibrancy of faith will need careful revision and development.

Here is one topical example. People sense that we’re at a very significant threshold in history where two pivotal stories meet – the love story revealed in the orthodox theology of nature and grace, and the amazing story revealed in the scientific explorations of a painfully evolving and utterly wonderful world.

These stories do not have to collide with each other: rather do they embrace each other, offering a fuller picture of what is beautiful and true. They both speak of a fundamental connectedness in our origins, evolution and destiny. The emerging cosmology, often called the New Universe Story, can be seen as validating the rich theological (but mostly neglected) vision which has always been at the heart of true Christianity.

A new consciousness of the bigger picture is called for, a clearer insight into the intrinsic connection between Creation and Incarnation, into the deepening conversation between the mystic and the physicist. A fundamental concept is that we all flow from one source; some will call it the process of evolution, others the work of the Holy Spirit.

In *Field of Compassion*, Judy Cannato writes, “There is a single Creator of the entire cosmos, a Creator who remains present to every part of the cosmos, sustaining and empowering its ongoing life and development. This same Creator will bring the whole movement of evolutionary Creation to completion.” The original divine design in our evolving world is revealed in Incarnation, to be fulfilled in the Omega of Revelation.

Pentecost reminds us that God's fire already burns in the darkest depths of the living earth. Ultimately, for the Christian, the Holy Spirit is present as the innermost mystery of all things, and may be understood as the invisible power at work in a continually evolving universe, until God be "all in all". There is now no longer a destructive dualism between the things of God and the things of earth. "When we want both the God of infinity and the spirit

The recovery of a theology of nature and grace, now enriched by the emerging insights of the new cosmology, will have profound implications for many Christian teachings, for our understanding of sacrament, for pastoral ministry, for the religion/science debate and for a new evangelising of young and old. It will help, above all, to shift our self-image as fallen failures, complicit somehow in the death of Jesus, to an awareness of our role as vital co-creators with God of a steadily developing, ever-evolving universe. We are not guilty exiles on a fallen earth – we are the beloved bearers of her divine dream.



(Jan Grajczonek)

Young children's (from birth to eight) spirituality and their spiritual and religious development are of central relevance and importance to whom they are and whom they will become. All children are innately spiritual. Their identity, sense of belonging and sense of meaning, as well as their purpose in life are all inextricably intertwined with, and affected by, their spirituality and the ways through which that spirituality might be nurtured. It is acknowledged that if young children's spirituality is ignored, it will fade and be lost (Crompton, 1998; Eaude, 2003).

¹ Read this article for CPTD points. See Page 22.

implicit and explicit nurturing of young children's spiritual development is of utmost importance. Such nurturing requires a holistic approach providing the language, ways and means that enable young children to respond to, and express, their spirituality as they interact with others and their world. Furthermore, both the implicit and explicit nurturing of young children's spirituality is fundamental to the development of their religiosity, or religious identity of all kinds. Religiosity as the lived expression of one's lived spirituality through a particular religious tradition, is "a measure of religious behaviour such as attendance at church /synagogue and so on, frequency of prayer, engagement in a local community of faith" (Rossiter, 2010, p. 7). This is an especially salient point for early childhood settings in the Catholic tradition, particularly when viewed through Bradford's (1999) perception of the relationship between what he calls "human spirituality" and "devotional spirituality":

being loved	becomes	identity as a member of a religious community
feeling secure	becomes	nurtured in a religious tradition
responding in wonder	becomes	a framework for worship
being affirmed	becomes	empowerment for service
symbolic sharing	becomes	experience of community. (p. 6)

The Framework for Early Years Spiritual Development in the Catholic Tradition focuses on the characteristics and attributes that comprise the very essence of young children's spirituality and suggests a pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and nurtures, those characteristics in each child. This Framework is intended as a reference document to inform, guide and shape policy, curriculum and practice regarding the development of young children's spirituality in the Catholic Child Care and Early Childhood Settings. In this capacity, the Framework complements the document, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, 2009) in the following ways:

- ❖ *The Framework for Early Years Spiritual Development in the Catholic Tradition* recognises and acknowledges that young children's sense of belonging is integral to their spirituality;
- ❖ *The Framework for Early Years Spiritual Development in the Catholic Tradition* acknowledges that young children's spirituality is at the heart of their being, that is, it is who they are now in the present time; and
- ❖ *The Framework for Early Years Spiritual Development in the Catholic Tradition* acknowledges that the implicit and explicit nurturing of young children's spiritual development is essential to their becoming, as they learn to become relational, resilient and active members of their families and communities.

The early childhood setting in the Catholic Tradition committed to young children's spiritual development is underpinned, informed and shaped by the following principles:

- ❖ Acknowledgement that all children are innately spiritual and that their spiritual development is intertwined with, and essential to, their wholeness and wellbeing;
- ❖ Recognition that children's spirituality is manifested and enhanced with everyday experiences, that 'relational consciousness' is at the core of their spirituality, and that each child's personal spiritual signature comprises: their sense of being loved, feeling secure and culturally safe; of loving and caring for themselves, others, and their environment; their ability to go beyond themselves or transcendence; their sense of meaning and purpose in life; their imagination and creativity; sense of awe and wonder; and appreciation of the aesthetic;
- ❖ Appreciation of the relationship between spiritual development and religious development and that the implicit, as well as explicit and intentional, nurturing of children's spirituality can lead to the development of their religiosity in all religious traditions;
- ❖ Understanding that people, materials, time, space and content occupy a pivotal place and role in the implicit, as well as intentional and explicit, nurturing of children's spiritual development.

*The early childhood setting in the Catholic Tradition committed to young children's spiritual development recognises and acknowledges the following **characteristics and capacities** as intrinsically intertwined in each child's personal spiritual signature:*

- ❖ Their **relationships** and **sense of connectedness**:
 - with others shown in their empathy, compassion and love;
 - with themselves as shown in their self-respect, self-efficacy and self-confidence;
 - with the environment shown in their appreciation and care of their surroundings;
 - with, for some, God or an Ultimate.

The spiritual aspect of children's relationships is at a deep level wherein they can, through those relationships, find their place in the world and come to understand their own **identity** and **sense of belonging** to a group. Children's **sense of searching** or **spiritual questing** is an integral aspect of their identity, place and purpose, and is linked to their existential questions such as "Who am I? Where do I fit in? Why am I here?"

- ❖ Their **sense of awareness** of people, events, experiences and surroundings exhibited through their complete attention to, or absorption in whatever they are doing or attending to. This can be observed in the ways children focus on the event or experience; it might be that they are in tune with the experience to such an extent that they are oblivious of other nearby extraneous or outside experiences; it is in the way they are present to the situation, activity, experience or person.
- ❖ Their **sense of mystery** which includes children's response to, and appreciation of, the intangible, an event, experience, or natural phenomena expressed in their awe of, and wonder at, such events or experiences, or natural phenomena such as a summer storm, or even the aesthetic such as a particular works of art, pieces of music, and so on. Other aspects of their sense of mystery are children's wonderings at the big questions about life and meaning, truth and justice, reality and death. Children's mystery sensing can be exhibited in their imagination and creativity as they respond to such events, experiences or phenomena.
- ❖ Their **sense of transcendence** which enables children to go beyond themselves to relate to, and connect with, other people, the environment, and with the Divine or Ultimate force.
- ❖ Their **sense of value** which can be observed when children respond to events, stories, experiences observed in their delight or despair as they try to make sense or meaning of such events and experiences.
- ❖ Their **sense of wisdom** or **knowing** wherein children might find remarkable insight in an experience, event or phenomena. (Eaude, 2009; Hart, 2003; Hay & Nye, 2006).

*The early childhood setting in the Catholic Tradition committed to young children's spiritual development **nurtures each child's spiritual characteristics** implicitly and explicitly in ways that pay attention to the sensory, affective and cognitive domains.*

- ❖ Nurturing children's **relationships, sense of connectedness, identity** and **sense of belonging** by:
 - creating a community of friends, a network of kind, compassionate and respectful relationships;
 - giving children the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful;
 - assisting children to come to know themselves and what it means to "listen *to* their hearts"; as well as assisting them to become empathetic, compassionate and loving by showing them how to "listen *with* their hearts" (Hart, 2003);
 - developing a climate within which all children can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected;

- accommodating difference, including cultural difference and respecting the integrity of individuals;
 - encouraging children to manage conflict peacefully and modelling specific strategies by which they could achieve this;
 - giving children opportunities to contribute, important things to do, and thanking when they have shared, helped, cooperated so that they experience their value as members of the classroom community;
 - giving children a voice by asking children for their opinions, likes and dislikes; as well as giving children choices of activities in which the group might partake and opportunities to make decisions for the group. Such activities also nurture children's **sense of wisdom**;
 - giving children time and explicit guidance to reflect and learn from reflection.
- ❖ Nurturing children's **sense of transcendence** by:
- encouraging them to wonder about God and explore the many images of God provided in scripture;
 - exploring images of the Divine from other religious traditions represented in the setting;
 - giving time and space for children to be still, meditate and pray.
- ❖ Nurturing children's **sense of awareness** by:
- giving time for children to become conscious of, and express, their likes, dislikes, gifts, responses to a variety of stimuli including those activities in which they engage on a regular basis such as play, painting, sand play and so on; as well as understanding that this nurture of their consciousness assists them to discover their purpose and calling in life;
 - encouraging children to pay attention to their responses to a variety of stimuli including to music through painting, body sculpturing, or responding to a story or a character's actions/experiences in a story or scripture passage;
 - giving time and space to create specific discussions in which children are invited to express their own feelings and emotions, likes and dislikes, and provide responses to a variety of stimuli;
 - encouraging children to reflect on their disappointments and frustrations; developing their resilience and ability to grow from such experiences by asking such questions as "If you could teach someone about this, what would you tell him or her?" (Hart, 2003). Using children's literature as stimuli for such explorations and discussions;
 - encouraging children to explore and develop what animates themselves and others.
- ❖ Nurturing children's **sense of mystery** by:
- creating an awareness and appreciation of the unknown nurtured when curiosity is encouraged;
 - noticing and appreciating the beauty and mystery of nature;
 - allowing children to question - not overemphasising facts;
 - stimulating their imagination with story, scripture, gestures and symbols;
 - giving time for children to wonder as they respond to a rich variety of: literature including scripture stories, concrete and abstract materials including religious symbols and artefacts, art works, sculpture and so on.
- ❖ Nurturing children's **sense of value** by:
- giving children the opportunity to explore values and religious beliefs, particularly Christian beliefs and gospel values, as well as those representing children from other religious traditions, and the ways in which those beliefs and values affect people's lives;
 - supporting and developing children's religious beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them;

- giving time for children to express their likes, dislikes, gifts, responses and the like to a variety of stimuli;
- discussing with children the various values developed in children's literature and scripture stories, as well as identifying characters' values in their responses to various situations in the stories. (Baumgartner & Buchanan, 2010; Eaude, 2009; Hart, 2003; Hyde, 2006; OFSTED, 2004, as cited in Ruddock & Cameron (Sean), 2010)

The early childhood setting in the Catholic Tradition committed to young children's spiritual development recognises the pivotal place people, climate, pedagogy, materials, time, space and content occupy in the nurture of each child's spiritual characteristics by:

- ❖ recognising the significance of adults' own sensitivities to, and expressions of, the spiritual;
- ❖ providing an environment that is open and sensitive to the cultural and spiritual in which all children feel safe, loved, affirmed and valued;
- ❖ promoting a pedagogy that includes a ritual of care, as well as teaching styles, time and space that encourage, listen to, and respond to children's voices;
- ❖ implementing a variety of approaches that provide children with the ways and specific language to recognise and voice their thoughts, ideas, concerns, questions, wonderings and so on including: capturing and making the most of the 'teachable moment'; integrating across all contexts for learning including play; providing specific times/sessions that intentionally and explicitly highlight such experiences and teach the specific language;
- ❖ ensuring that curriculum includes relevant and appropriate content, resources, designated time and space that intentionally and explicitly develop and nurture children's language acquisition to express their thoughts, ideas, concerns, questions, wonderings and so on, concerning their spirituality;
- ❖ enabling children to make connections between all aspects of learning to their lives. (Bradford, 1999; OFSTED, 2004, as cited in Ruddock & Cameron (Sean), 2010)

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CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Educating through the Five Cs: Creativity, Compassion, Courage, Concept and Constraint

(Christopher Kukk)

The bridge between knowledge and wisdom is education. The journey across that bridge forms either an educated person or simply a knowledgeable individual. The difference between the two is significant for society and the world in that while the latter only knows the facts the former learns “how to make facts live.” An education that bridges knowledge with wisdom seeks to blend the scientist with the artist and the philosopher with the practitioner to create scholars that are engaged citizens. While many politicians and administrators are installing mechanized systems of education in our schools and universities based on standardized testing (i.e., simply knowing facts), there should be a revival for schools

on all levels requiring critical thinking as well as oral communication and writing skills that educate for the purpose of fostering innovation. For the value of an education comes from being more than an experience that certifies its students, it comes more from providing a learning environment that fosters innovation and imagination in and outside the classroom. There are five main interconnected elements, similar to the Buddhist philosophy *godai* (see Figure 1), that create learning environments which nurture an educated person (the Five Cs): concept, creativity, compassion, courage, constraint (see Figure 2). Educating through the Five Cs teaches students “how to make facts live.”

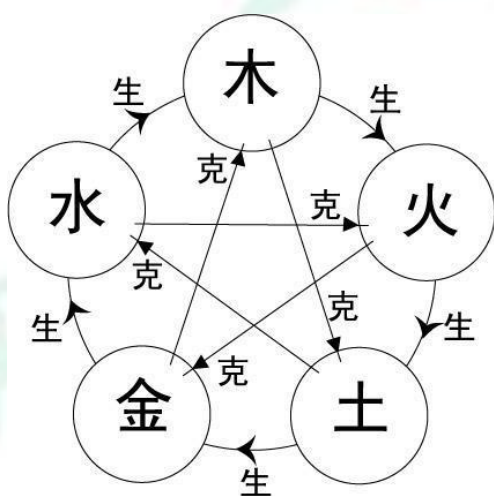


Figure 1

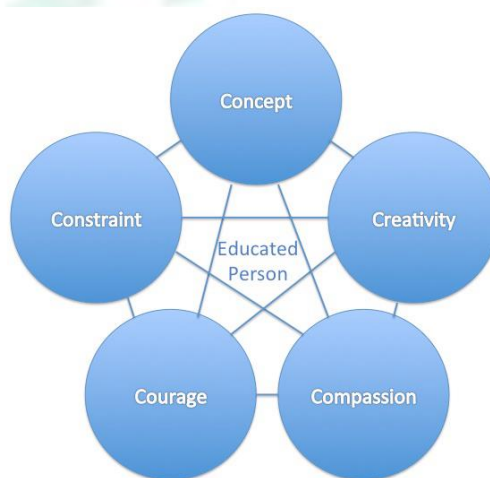


Figure 2

To Know

The first element of the Five Cs, concept, is centered upon building a student's knowledge base. Educating in this first element is about constructing a foundation for learning by teaching a holistic understanding of basic concepts and ideas. It is, however, not just about learning facts. To have holistic understanding is to know concepts by examining and studying them

from as many angles, disciplines, processes and perspectives as possible. When it comes to understanding human-induced climate change, for instance, it is important to know the different temperature datasets that each side uses in the debate. It is important because one side uses ground and satellite temperature data whereas the other uses only, in general, one piece of satellite records. More specifically, while the climate change doubters

use satellite data demonstrating a cooling of the stratosphere, the believers include both atmospheric (the troposphere is warming) and ground temperature datasets to construct their 'warming' arguments. To know how temperature is defined in a debate about climate change matters for a holistic understanding.

Similarly, the concept of time is key to understanding climate change and the debate. The doubters are correct when they state that natural climate change similar in magnitude to today's world happened in the past. However, the believers are also correct when they argue that our current change in climate is happening much faster than at in any time in Earth's history. In other words, while the opponents of the theory of human-induced climate change are using time in mainly a historical sense, the proponents define time in a temporal fashion (i.e., historical and durational). Knowing, in this case, how the temperature datasets and time are defined provides a clearer understanding of what informs the different perspectives on climate change as compared to simply being acquainted with the ideas or sides of the debate. It is the difference between being acquainted with an idea and knowing it. In addition, interdisciplinary learning about concepts is necessary. For example, in relation to climate change, wouldn't it be beneficial to both society and Earth if policymakers actually knew the science behind the policies they were devising and voting on?

To Make



The second element, creativity, is focused upon cultivating a creative environment by fostering innovative ways of using concepts and ideas. Students, throughout

their education, should be viewed as creators as well consumers of knowledge. Educating has become too much of a passive experience for students where their main activity is taking standardized tests. Students should be allowed and taught to interactively explore and combine concepts and ideas in innovative ways. Innovation is currency in a highly globalized and interdependent world; those who can innovate will elevate their socio-economic standing in the world. Our school environments should be places where time for creative insight (i.e. exploration) is allowed and where creative work (i.e., critical thinking) is instituted. This is exactly what the highest standardized test scorers in the world, the Finns, do. As a recent analysis of Finland's education system concluded, "In contrast [to the United States and the United Kingdom], the central aim of Finnish education is the development of each child as a thinking, active, creative person, not the attainment of higher test scores." It is ironic that the world's leading country on knowing the facts does not have the focus of its education system on learning the facts; rather, it educates its students primarily about how to make the facts live. In other words, by learning how to make the facts live, one learns the facts better. It is similar to learning a language. A person learns a language better by having to actively live or use it in a foreign country as compared to passively learning it from a book. Overall, this element of the Five Cs is about making something new (i.e., a new solution to an old problem, a new way of understanding or even a new product) out of what we know from books and experiences.

To See

The third element, compassion, is concerned with being aware of how ideas, solutions and actions may affect others. In this element, educating is for alleviating the suffering of ignorance. For we all know the aphorism of where good intentions and ideas can lead without understanding or considering their effects. "The evil that is in the world," according to Albert Camus, "almost always comes of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as

malevolence if they lack understanding.” A lack of understanding was the difference between China and Korea’s recent approach to decreasing traffic accidents in their respective countries. Both countries decided to use countdown clocks at traffic lights in an effort to reduce the number of accidents. While Korea has experienced a dramatic decrease in traffic accidents, China has seen a significant increase. Why the difference? Korea installed countdown clocks during red lights while China placed them for green lights. Korea understood the difference of placing a countdown clock during a red as compared to a green light; while people are more patient waiting at a red light if they know its duration, people speed up to get through a green light if they know its time is about to end. Understanding the context in which an idea is going to be used matters just as much as the idea itself. In this case, the context changed the meaning and understanding of a countdown clock.

If students have an understanding of the effects that their ideas, solutions and actions can possibly have in the world, they are likely to recognize the responsibilities that are attached with creating such ideas and, therefore, an education in general. Becoming aware of how ideas and solutions can affect people makes students aware of the responsibilities they have as an educated person. And acknowledging the responsibility for our own words, thoughts and actions is something that this world needs a little more of. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, states it best: “In the present circumstances, no one can afford to assume that someone else will solve their problems. Every individual has a responsibility to help guide our global family in the right direction. Good wishes are not sufficient; we must become actively engaged.”

To Act



Inspiring active engagement is the purpose of the fourth element, courage. Once

a consensus is formed that an idea is generally heading “in the right direction,” a school or university should encourage students and faculty to act on the conceptual innovation. An educated person does not simply sit on new knowledge, he or she does something with that new knowledge. Universities, especially, should incorporate learning-by-doing into the curriculum. Two universities in Pakistan, the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and Aga Khan University, are learning-by-doing and doing good at the same time. Both universities have decided to incorporate practical training into traditional academic programs such as engineering and the sciences with a focus on disaster prevention and assistance. While NUST is formalizing its program with a plan to provide a master’s degree in disaster management, Aga Khan simply requires 20% of a student’s academic program to consist of community work. Such requirements make the students

know what the world out there looks like. They have seen how great the need can be. When disaster strikes, they don’t ask: What can we do? No, they ask: Where can we go? Exposure to extreme need breeds compassion...Pakistani practice shows that involvement in direct practical relief can be a great idea. It won’t get the university on to the Shanghai or Times Higher rankings, but it actually saves people’s lives and it solidly cements the university into its surrounding community (Ard Jongsma, “Pakistan: A Different Twist to Learning by Doing”).

Education should not be a race for higher rankings but a journey into developing educated people. Too many schools in the West have entered the race for higher rankings and abandoned the journey that education ought to be. Such a race is without a destination and, like most races, it usually leads in one direction: a circle.

To Challenge

The fifth element, constraint, is about educators establishing rules and using limitations to foster an environment where students feel safe to learn holistically and

think creatively. We traditionally consider aspects of this element as 'thinking outside the box.' In order to think outside the box, however, students need to have knowledge of the box; knowledge of its dimensional limitations. Artists and designers have called such limitations creative constraints. Poets use structure and forms such as in haikus and sonnets to generate new ways of using words while designers have produced everything from dresses to cars using the philosophy of "design through discipline." A recent study from the University of Amsterdam found that "The frustrations of form come with a mental benefit—letting people think in a more holistic and creative fashion...It's not until we encounter an unexpected hindrance—a challenge we can't easily solve—that the chains of cognition are loosened, giving us newfound access to the weird connections simmering in the imagination." Innovators discover ways of generating creativity out of form. Creative constraints provide students with opportunities to gain a deeper and broader understanding of reality. Einstein started within the box of Newtonian physics and then thought beyond that box in ways that changed our perception of reality. "Imagination," according to Albert Einstein, "is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." He called all concepts "the free inventions of the human intellect." An education that uses the free inventions of the human intellect through creative constraints has the real chance of constructively changing how the world defines and learns basic concepts.

Educating through the Five Cs is needed because the current bridge of education is broken. The bridge is broken because it leads to something else other than an educated person. Our system is manufacturing students who know some facts but certainly do not know how the facts live in their everyday world. In educating, we've lost our way from the halls of Raphael's

School of Athens and meandered onto the factory floors of mechanized education. Following the Five Cs will, I believe, guide us back to the School of Athens' halls of knowledge and wisdom.



Anyone can start anywhere on the 'education *godai*' or, in other words, with any of the Five Cs. The Five Cs support and fuel each other and an educator should try and connect each C in as many ways possible. The education *godai*, in essence, is a creative constraint in itself for educators. A high school in Hawaii, Kailua High School, decided to start with compassion in an effort to reduce violence and bullying. Kailua has woven the Dalai Lama's teachings into its school-wide curriculum since 2004 and has seen decreases in violence and bullying while experiencing increased levels of critical thinking and transfer students into the district. Other ideas for entering the education *godai* include developing interdisciplinary majors (concept and creativity), incorporating service learning into the curriculum (courage and compassion), and requiring capstone projects that are framed by respected creative limitations (constraints). Furthermore, educators at every level should be required to demonstrate how they are fostering creativity and innovation within their classes as well as between their students and the community. The strength of an education is determined by how unified knowledge and wisdom become. The Five Cs lead to a convergence of the scientist with the artist and the philosopher with the practitioner to make an educated person.



ARTISTS' CORNER



Jyoti Sahi

Art Ashram, Silvepura P.O Bangalore North. Karnataka 560090 India. (<http://jyotiartashram.blogspot.com/>)

I have been concerned with the relation of Art and Crafts to Philosophy and Theology. At the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts in London, where I studied from 1959-63, I was introduced to the ideas of Ananda Coomaraswamy. As I had first received my training in art from Sudhir Khastigir, one of the early students at the Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan, I was interested in the ideas about Indian arts and crafts. I met Dom Bede

Griffiths in 1963 in England, who was giving talks about his experience of setting up an Ashram in Kerala called Kurisumala. Earlier, when still in England he had been involved with an artist community called the Taener Community. He invited me to his Ashram where I went in 1964. At that time the architect Laurie Baker was also living near the Ashram. I worked with Laurie Baker in the designing of some buildings, inspired by his ideas on vernacular architecture. I came to Bangalore in 1970 to work at the NBCLC, which had been established in 1967 under the leadership of Dr. Amalorpavadas to reflect on the whole process of "inculturation" in the Indian Church. I started an Art Ashram in 1983 on a piece of land near our home in a village north of Bangalore. I began to work at the Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in 1997, where I have been involved teaching courses thinking about the relation of art and Design to the philosophy of art, and concepts of sacred space.



Jesus the "Light of the World"



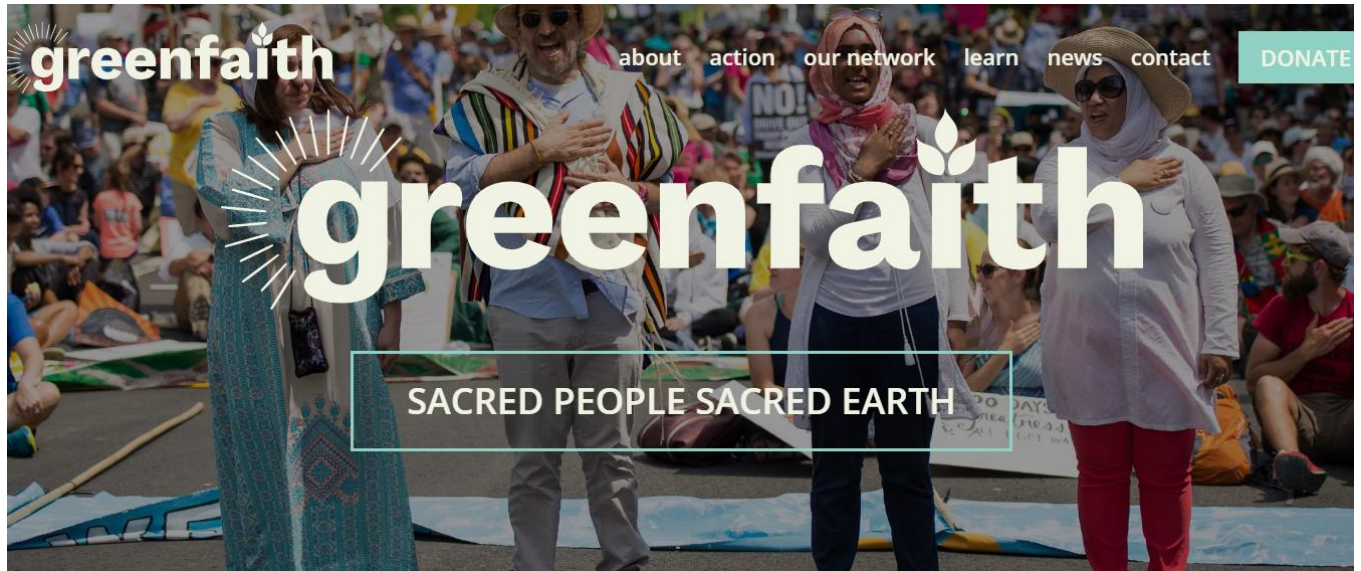
The Risen Christ as the Dancer



WEBSITE

Greenfaith

www.greenfaith.org



We are greenfaith. Join our community.

We're building a worldwide, multi-faith climate and environmental movement. Share your email to connect globally and get involved.

Driven by Compassion, Love, and Justice



Our Theory of Change

People of faith and conscience have an irreplaceable role to play in working for climate and environmental justice. The GreenFaith community is building a movement that is diverse, strong, and loving enough to transform our world.



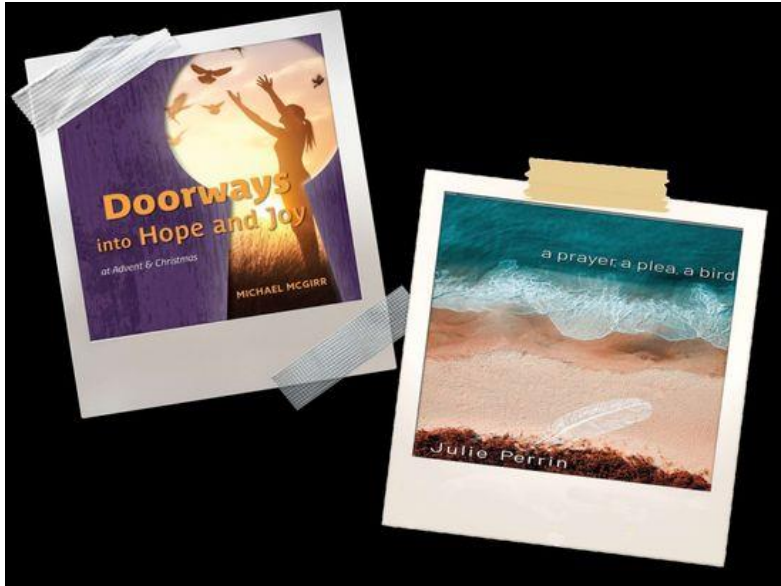
BOOK REVIEW

Language as an open door

<https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/language-as-an-open-door/13489>

(Andrew Hamilton)

These two books offer splendid examples of the power of the language of faith and of prayer



For writers one of the most infuriating features of words is that they grow stale. This is true of images, too.

What was yesterday a striking phrase that offered a new perspective will tomorrow be a tired cliché on whose meaning no one reflects.

This process is speeded up by advertisers who constantly look for fresh images and words to dispose people kindly to the products that they sell.

Think of the image of a sweet elderly couple bathed in golden autumnal light on almost every brochure for

nursing homes or insurance.

Or of the fair haired, blue eyed boy with a computer under one arm and a tennis racket in the other who decorates promotional material for schools, accompanied by words in the same enticing key.

I don't object to this commodification of words and images. But it does constantly challenge writers and speakers to find fresh words for fresh insights into reality.

This is especially true of religious language which attempts to catch a reality whose experience lies beyond words. St Paul stretches words and images to the limit when describing the significance of Christ.

The stories and images of the Book of Revelation and the Gospels also take words beyond where they comfortably fit. To describe Jesus' tortured execution as the source of life is a hard ask.

When freshly minted, images like redemption, sacrifice and atonement were vivid and startling. Later, however, the images dulled and the words described a doctrine, not a startling insight.

The images and language of Christmas have grown particularly weary.

As it has become a public rather than a religious celebration, the words associated with it have been commodified to sell food and drink, all kinds of trinkets as presents, and a generalised bonhomie as the appropriate mood.

Even the cards that put Christ back into Christmas make the manger a nice place, remove the dirt and smells that go with cattle, shepherds, camel travellers and two young people seeking shelter after a long journey.

For people who do it hard, the language, the gift-giving and the feasting cannot but remind them of their exclusion.

Finding intimations of immortality in the mortality

If we want to renew religious language and images we must begin with attention to the words we currently use, noticing their resonance as well as their meaning. It is then important for the language of [prayer](#) and reflection to be grounded in deep contemporary experience.

In the Christmas stories, for example, we need to pay attention to the experience of people who have a similar position in our society — to find equivalents to the young people desperate for a room in which decently to bear a child, to the shepherds regarded as marginal and irreligious by a religious society, to Herod's soldiers free to intimidate, to rob and to kill, and to a grotty field on the edge of town.

In prayer, too, we need to find words that encompass the desperation, rage, terror and passion that need healing and acceptance.

Finally, if our words are to open to us another world beyond that of our daily routine, they must be evocative, finding intimations of immortality in the mortality that they touch.

These thoughts were inspired by two recently published small books of prayers. Michael McGirr's *Doorways into Hope and Joy* focuses on the scriptural readings for Advent and Christmas, Julie Perrin's *A prayer, a plea, a bird*, addresses the ordinary predicaments of life. Its prayers and blessings are complemented by stories that reveal an extraordinary depth in simple human experience.

In his work Michael McGirr seeks paths through the ordinary that reveal its depths, and evokes a hope to which our daily experience points, but which lies beyond it.

The style of his prayers are conversational, addressing a God who clearly enjoys our company and respects our ordinary lives.

The prayers are an informal exchange with a God who clearly enjoys our company and is quite happy to be told what she already knows. This prayer is characteristic in this ease of approach:

'God of great adventures, we know that you do not reside behind closed doors. In Advent we recall that you pitched your tent among us. It was a tent, not a temple. You travel light among the heavy-hearted. And move nimbly among those burdened with inflexible ideas... May we make those tentative steps down the street. Where your heart bleeds for the lost and wounded.'

This prayer has all the traditional virtues of a good prayer and the modern virtues of a good conversation. It focuses on God, but in a conversational rather than formal way.

It makes modest, though difficult, requests. It is simple in its language, contrasting God's behaviour with human inflexibility and timidity.

It also carefully brings into the backyard of the ordinary the qualities that we normally reserve for the parlour of the exceptional: the open doors of transcendence, and the tent of intimacy and closeness, the nimbleness opposed to inflexibility and, in contrast to the heroic virtue on which prayers often focus, the tentativeness of compassion.

In prayer the opening of the door takes us out of darkness into light, and out of apathy into compassion.

McGirr's prayers also find words with room for the desperate places of our lives and for hope in spite of all.

One prayer, triggered by the story of the children whom Herod had murdered, is unyielding in attending to the horror of the event and to its salience in our day:

'Their parents would surely never forget either their little faces,
nor their own cold distress.'

These children stand for every innocent victim of every terror in every age,
The people swept aside by the dark lust for power and control.
You know, O Lord, that grief takes time
And that memory can be its true friend.
May we keep track of our emotions, however, uncomfortable
And know how to look you up
In the place you dwell
Which is called Today. Amen'

Desperate situations must be entered as well as spoken about

The poignancy of 'little faces' and the unflinching reference to 'cold distress' are given full weight. The prayer then turns to the pain and consolation of memory and the intimacy of a God whom we can 'look up' and who lives with us in our time.

Julie Perrin's work displays the same scrupulous attention to the world around us, and readiness to enter into its darkness and pain as well as into its consolations.

It covers a broader range of topics and forms of writing than does McGirr's, including prayers, blessings, stories and reflections, many of them responding to the coronavirus.

Whereas Doorways into Hope and Joy is addressed mainly to Catholic readers as an encouragement to prayer, the audience for which *A prayer, a plea, a bird* is written includes readers of many faiths or none. It invites them to find depth and presence in the midst of ordinary experience.

Perrin's greatest gift as a writer lies in her ability to attend closely to the detail of apparently ordinary experience and to catch its depth and wonder in precise but evocative words. This description of cattle in a paddock, for example:

'I blinked awake. Not twenty feet away there were six Black Angus cattle lined up along the wire fence. Their attention did not stir or flicker. They were assembled, exact and equidistant, utterly unmoving.

They stared at me with a level gaze. Birds landed on the backs of two of them and at length another two licked the outside of their mouths with fat fleshy tongues. Eventually their long, slow, silent looking broke away and they began cricking their necks and inclining their heads.'

In this most everyday and bovine of scenes is a precise, concrete and detailed description of the cattle. It arises out of a close attention. The words are not chosen in order to elevate the scene into the sublime but to represent with scrupulous accuracy its everyday reality.

Yet in doing so they lend to the cattle a solemnity and evoke a respect for the depth that underlies the scene. The modesty and scrupulous accuracy of the language disclose a world beyond what can be represented.

An adequate language of prayer and of spirituality requires that desperate situations must be entered as well as spoken about. Perrin is a teller of stories.

Those chosen for inclusion in this book give flesh to the prayers, blessings and reflections gathered around them. The stories within this collection explore realities that are both everyday and difficult.

They embrace, for example, the care taken to support a child with autism, the experience both of elderly people dying unaccompanied by relatives during the lockdown and of the relatives excluded from their presence, the onset of depression.

Such experience helps shape the prayers with a modesty and evoke a hope that is grounded in experience but takes wing beyond it.

'One of the most daring prayers is for people who are bereft of hope, possibly after the bushfires.

God of the-ones-who-have-no-hope,
 you know the despair of erasure.
 Underneath the ashes that remain from all the burnings,
 prod coals that once held flame.
 Provoke the cry of a remembered self
 calling to the One who said the great I AM.'

The prayer contemplates a total erasure from life through the image of unrelieved ash.

Then it turns to the possibility of flame and its warmth to spark the memory of a self who could pray to a God who might still be there.

Though the movement towards hope is delicate and conditional, it hangs there at the end of the prayer.

These two books offer splendid examples of the power of the language of faith and of prayer. They also invite us to reflect on how this gift might be respected and developed.



LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Award-winning Capetonian Fr. Christopher Clohessy



1. You are a priest from Cape Town, and you are a lecturer at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies. How did a priest from Cape Town end up teaching Arabic and Islamic studies of all things, in Rome?

Years ago, while working as a parish priest in one of the Cape Flats parishes, I suggested to the Archbishop that somebody ought to make an academic study of Islam. This was, in part, because of the numbers of those practicing Islamic faith in those parts of the Cape, but also because there were so many families in the parish in which a son or daughter had, for one or more reasons, converted to Islam. They did not cease to be members of the own families

and therefore, by extension, the parish community. I thought it would be important to possess enough knowledge to stand with reverence before the life choices they had made, without necessarily agreeing with them, and to be able to talk about faith and God with them in a way that was respectful and coherent. Some months later, the Archbishop met up by chance in Rome with some of the curial officials attached to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, who asked when a South African would be sent to study Islam. So, I ended up doing a Masters and then a PhD, studying between the Cairo Institute run by the Comboni Fathers, and the Rome-based Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, under the direction of the Missionaries of Africa (who used to be known as the White Fathers). I am now on the teaching staff of the same Institute in Rome.

2. *Most Catholic don't even imagine that the Church would even think about studying, let alone teaching about Islam. What is the importance of having the Pontifical Institute related to Islamic and Arabic studies instead of just letting people who are curious about Islam and Arab world just do their own private enquiry?*

The Institute was initiated by the White Fathers in Tunisia, with the intention of teaching the Arabic language and Islamic theology to their own missionaries working in Islamic territories. Little by little, other Orders and Congregations expressed an interest in sending students and the Institute grew rapidly. After Tunisian independence, the Institute was forced to move to Rome, where it has been ever since. It's primary role remains unchanged: to offer a full course of Arabic and Islamic Studies to those who are working in Islamic territories, and to promote an educated and harmonious dialogue between Catholics and Muslims. Currently, therefore, our students are a mix of priests, religious, and laity, all of whom are studying Arabic and Islamic for one of the above purposes. As such, this college has already produced at least seven martyrs, all of them now beatified.

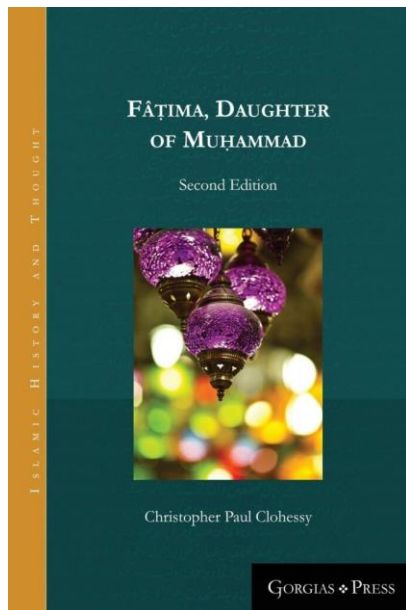
3. *How does teaching Islamic and Arabic Studies contribute to Inter-religious dialogue?*

Teaching Islamic and Arabic Studies contributes to interreligious relations in a simple way: any sort of dialogue, whether it be interreligious or intercultural, needs to be an educated dialogue. The two parties need to be thoroughly versed not only in their own religion and culture, but in the religion and culture of their partner in dialogue. In this, the Catholic Church is light years ahead, not only of any other Christian denominations involved in this field, but also of Islam, which has very few centres for the study of Christian culture and religion.

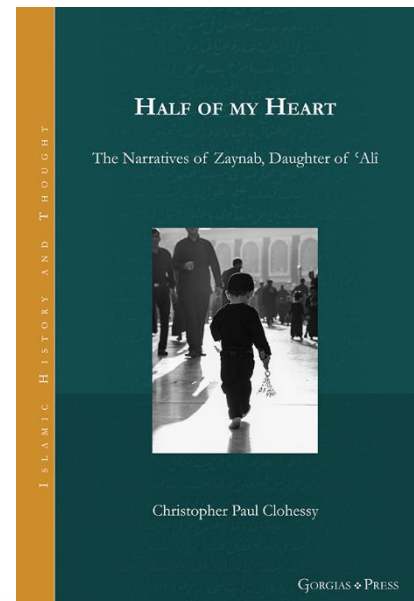
4. *It is one thing being a lecturer and it is another being a writer. Your books have received very good reviews. Did you always have the passion for writing?*

I always found writing quite easy; it's a hobby, really, something I keep on the burner to tinker with in free moments. My first book, on Muhammad's daughter Fatima, is my PhD thesis. The second was the result of a 'challenge' the four priests living on the staff here set each other – that since Muslim scholars were not writing about their principal female figures, we would each take an important Muslim woman and produce a thorough, academic biography. I had no idea that they were joking, and so set about writing and publishing a book on Zaynab, the daughter of Fatima. My third book, being published this month, concerns the theme of dreams and angelic visitations in Islam, warning of a catastrophic event, and concerns the martyrdom of Fatima's son al-Husayn at the Battle of Karbala in the year 680.

5. *You have written books on Fatima, The daughter of Muhammad and Half of my Heart: The Narratives of Zaynab, Daughter of Ali. Why focus on Fatima and Zaynab, noting also that they are both women, instead of any other figures in Islam?*



One of my consistent complaints has been that Islamic scholars neglect writing about the important female figures in Islam. This was one of the reasons why I chose to do my doctorate about Fatima – I was able to produce the first major work on her, in English, but based on Arabic sources. I have tried to do the same for Zaynab. Both women are iconic models for speaking the truth and standing for justice, and both can easily serve as paradigms for modern women and men who must face making even small moral choices each day, even though they may find this a great challenge.



6. *In the Islamic or Arab world or religion is there a connection between Lady Fatima and Our Lady of Fatima?*

No connection at all. The Portuguese town called Fatima was named after a woman named Fatima, the wife of a much later Caliph, and so has no real connection to Muhammad's daughter, despite the insistence of some popular piety.

7. *For your efforts you have recently won two awards. What are those awards and what is the significance of winning them and who gives these awards?*

I was surprised and delighted by both awards. The first one, which I discovered purely by accident, was that my book on Zaynab was nominated by the BookAuthority, in conjunction with Forbes and CNN, as one of the 95 most important works on Islamic history ever written! I still look askance at this, because I know some of the works that are not on the list! The second award came to my attention through an email from Iran on a Sunday morning, and which I thought might be a hoax. It announced that I was one of the recipients of the 28th World Book Award of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This award was won some years ago by another professor on our staff, and is prestigious, so again, I am delighted if not somewhat surprised.

8. *When writing your books did you have a specific audience in mind or you wrote for anyone who cared to read?*

I was writing primarily to introduce Islamic historical themes and bibliography to an English-speaking, non-Muslim readership. In particular, I hoped to offer them a glimpse into the lives and personalities of some of Islam's important women.

9. *With the knowledge that you have of the Islamic world and religion how have they received the Pope's latest Encyclical "Fratelli Tutti"? And how does Fratelli Tutti contribute to the work of the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic studies?*

In all honesty, I am not much of a fan either of the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* or of the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*; nor am I convinced that either has made any substantial impact on the Islamic world. Both texts disturb me slightly by their lack of linguistic precision and clear theology. *Fratelli Tutti* begins with an account of St. Francis' famous visit to the Sultan. This is almost certainly a fable and not an historical event – in fact, in the manner of its telling, it is precisely the opposite of all the guidelines we lay down for a healthy dialogue (Francis harangued the Sultan, scarcely letting him get a word in and insisting that he convert, and ended the day on a silly challenge to a trial by fire). Furthermore, the use of the word 'brotherhood' is problematic in that this is a crucial concept which carries a different theology and has vastly different parameters in the Islamic world than it does in the Christian world. The *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was couched almost entirely in Islamic phraseology, and the name of Christ does not occur; and again, in Islam, the concept of 'fraternity' does not carry the same meaning as it does on the Christian world. In the final analysis, aside from the lack of precision and clear theological vision, the impact of both documents will be seen (and must be seen) in whatever fruits they bear. In particular, freedom of worship, which is the most fundamental human freedom (as Pope Emeritus Benedict notes) because religion has been innate in humanity from the beginning) and the freedom to convert from one religion to another. These two fundamental rights are denied in a number of countries, and their being granted would be the chief and most important impact of Pope Francis' two texts.

<https://sacbc.org.za/award-winning-capetonian-fr-christopher-clohessy/13813/>



CPTD

Reclaiming Contemplation: How to enhance inner experience and personal growth in the RE classroom

Read the article for CPTD points and record your response to the following questions:

- What is the writer's main argument?
- What significance does the argument have in my context?
- What practical action does the argument's conclusion suggest?

Professional Development Points Schedule

<https://www.sace.gov.za/Documentation/PROFESSIONAL%20DEVELOPMENT%20POINTS%20SCHEDULE.pdf>



66 Nelson Road, Booyens, Johannesburg 2091
P O Box 2083 Southdale 2135;
Tel: 011 433 1888 Web: www.cie.org.za

