



LIVING SCHOOL ALUMNI
QUARTERLY

SPRING 2019
ISSUE 2

BEGIN
READING

NATURE: THE
FIRST BIBLE

A PUBLICATION FROM THE CENTER FOR ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION

We set out to create a digital publication that felt like it was in print. We heard from many of you that the experience of sitting down with a cup of coffee and reading about your beloved Alumni community was preferred. So, we created this format to resist distraction and invite attention. If you're reading on a desktop or laptop, expand the "landscape" version to full screen and turn off your notifications; or if an iPad or tablet is handy, enjoy this most book-like of reading experiences in either the "landscape" or "portrait" versions. The Table of Contents is clickable, allowing easy navigation to every section of the quarterly. We've also included a link to return to the TOC on every page, so it's easy to find your way back. Hyperlinks are in red type and underlined; click these to open webpages in your browser. We hope you enjoy this new format. If you have any questions, please email us at support@cac.org and we will help as soon as we can. Peace, CAC Design Team



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Dear Living School Alumni,

Reading Fr. Richard Rohr's book *The Universal Christ* for me has been like thirstily gulping fresh water from a well. I experience the book as a potent summation of groundbreaking content as well as a poignant invitation to prayer. The Universal Christ conference, which I live-streamed from my Massachusetts futon, conveyed the same galvanizing message: Christ is within and without, the transcendent yet personal, inner depth of reality both in crucifixion and resurrection. Christ's crucified body, Rev. Jacqui Lewis reminded conference goers and viewers, suffers with the marginalized, including the incarcerated and undocumented, even with the overheating Earth herself. Christ, the anointed one, shares that anointing, too, with the mundane: in my simple rural life, Christ reveals divine intimacy amongst church committee meetings, a six-year-old's temper tantrums, deep peace sitting by a river, a date with my wife, or paying my electricity bill. Christ is all in all.

It's a message I've long suspected but never studied, hoped for but never fully heard.

One aspect of many that I appreciate about Fr. Richard's retrieval of the Universal Christ tradition is that it is grounded in creation. Nature is the first Bible, the early church fathers claimed. Or, as Fr. Richard memorably puts it, "the Big Bang is the First Incarnation." The widening scope of anointing means that we all, with Moses, stand on holy ground—wherever we find ourselves. "This place is the gate of heaven!" biblical Jacob cried out. "The rock was Christ!" conference participants prayed. The Universal Christ contains an invitation to deep incarnation, which leads seamlessly to deep ecology and a growing awareness of the interconnected oneness of all life.

This Quarterly embraces a theme of "Nature: The First Bible." In the Contemplative Practice section, readers are invited to pray that God does indeed love things by becoming them. Dani Kruetter ('18) offers alumni a chance to engage in *visio divina* with her nature-based photo essay from Uganda. I interview CAC core faculty Cynthia Bourgeault, who suggests that the question about "Nature: The First Bible" might even be "jury-rigged from the start" by assuming a God who exists

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separate from nature in the first place. George and Matilda Angus ('18), writing from South Africa, share their artistic process of creating sculptures from rock. Gary Paul Nabhan ('16), a conservation biologist and member of the Ecumenical Order of Franciscans, asks, "What if getting our relationship right with the Earth and all its creatures is . . . as crucial as getting our relations right with our Creator, our family, and our neighbors?" There's also an inspiring integration project report from Indonesia, a "First Incarnation" inspired song from songwriter Alana Levandoski ('15), and much more.

As usual, I welcome your suggestions and submissions. The theme of the next Quarterly in August will be the challenging topic of addiction. I invite your articles, personal reflections, poems, photographs, and more. Send them to mlonghurst@cac.org by July 8.

Yours in a Christ-soaked universe,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Longhurst". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

—Mark Longhurst ('15)

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Visio Divina

Janet McKenzie, artist

CAC's March 2019 conference The Universal Christ featured works from Vermont-based artist Janet McKenzie. You are invited to encounter her artwork below as a visio divina practice. Gaze at McKenzie's Jesus of the People and The Resurrection and the very same Jesus will gaze back at you.

Jesus of the People was selected First Place winner of the National Catholic Reporter's global competition, "Jesus 2000," by juror, the late Sr. Wendy Beckett, twenty years ago. The reactions over time to my dark interpretation modeled by a woman have been viciously hateful to the point my mail was separated for fear of letter bombs. But loving responses swelled enormously, too, far outnumbering the negative and *Jesus of the People* is now embraced as a true icon of this era. I am often touched by someone excitedly coming up to me and telling me that *Jesus of the People* looks "just like" their sister or uncle. Invariably the reality is the person looks physically nothing like the image on the canvas. As an artist this touches me greatly because to me this is transcendent, affirming this interpretation of

Jesus of the People, Janet McKenzie, copyright 1999, janetmckenzie.com

Jesus is experienced via the heart and not just the eyes. I never thought twenty years ago that my inclusive version of Jesus would be needed more than ever in our wounded world—right now. I hope this image of Jesus, one that pays homage to women and marginalized and dark-skinned people the world over, continues to steadfastly serve as a voice of justice and love, reminding that we are all created equally in God's likeness.



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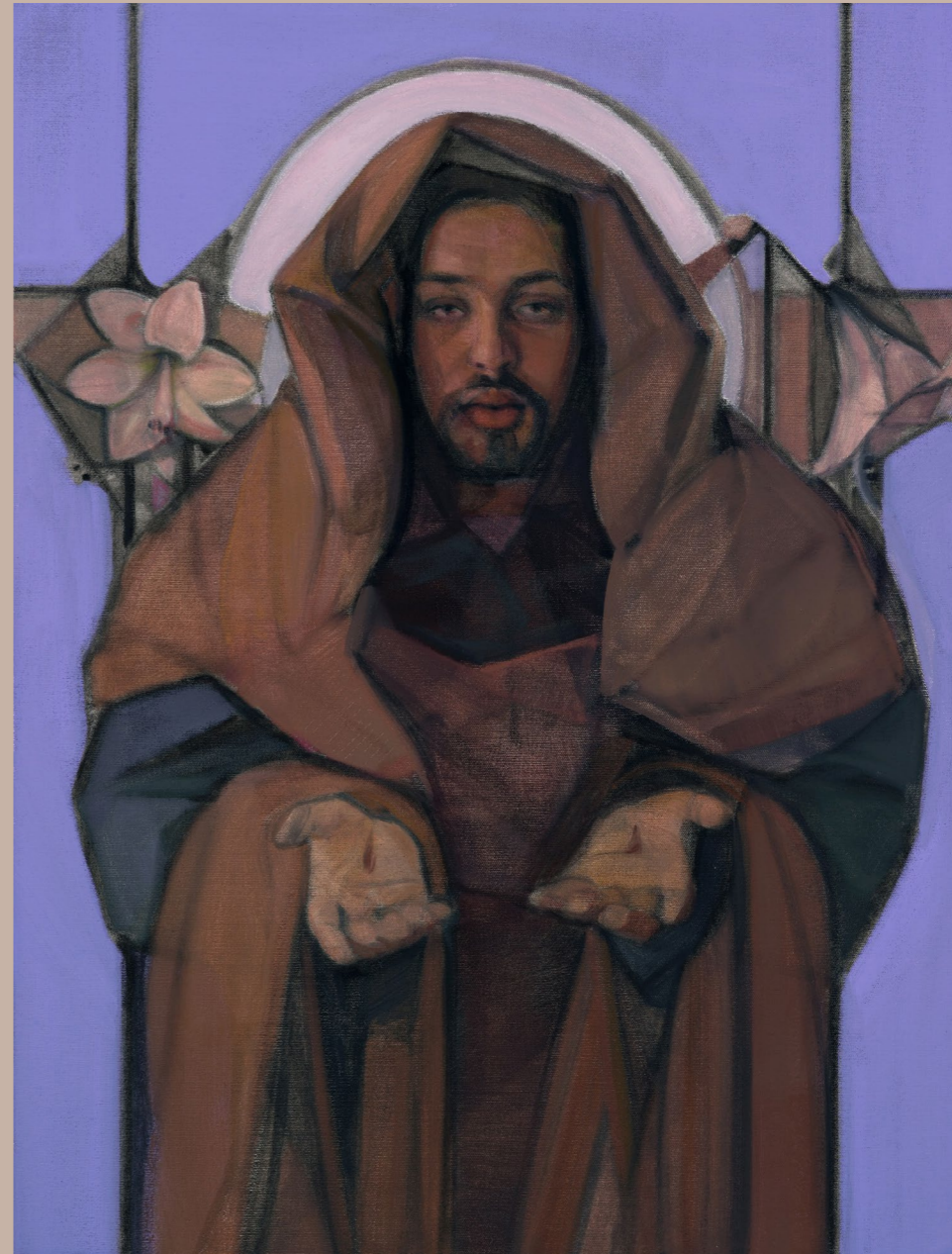
In 2013, Orbis Books asked if I would consider including *Station 15—The Resurrection* for the upcoming book they planned to publish, *The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life*, a collaboration between Sr. Joan Chittister and myself. After working an entire year on completing the stations of the cross, a difficult and emotional task especially during the long, dark Vermont winter, I was only too happy to focus on resurrection and hope.

The resurrection, the inner call to the Eternal More, to the sense of undying life within us, is the magnet that keeps us moving through life, in quest of its mystery, in certainty of its truth. Alleluia. —Joan Chittister, The Way of the Cross: The Path to New Life

Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. —Martin Luther

Award-winning artist Janet McKenzie pays homage to all people through her paintings as she feels everyone who believes has a right to find their own beautiful faces celebrated within sacred art. She is from New York City and now lives and works in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. You can follow her work at janetmckenzie.com.

Sr. Joan Chittister, O.S.B. is a beloved, well-known, and prophetic voice in the American Catholic Church and passionate supporter for women's rights.



The Resurrection, Janet McKenzie, copyright 2013, janetmckenzie.com

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God Loves Things by Becoming Them

*a prayer from The Universal
Christ Liturgies*

*Attendees of The Universal Christ
conference in March 2019 prayed this
Call and Response as a Holy Saturday
vigil for the universal body of Christ.*

*Excerpted from The Universal Christ
Liturgies (CAC Publishing: 2019),
29-30.*

Vigil Proclamation:

The speed of light is the one constant in the universe.
We are the light,
and this love that it symbolizes is the one thing that makes
the world go 'round.

Call and Response:

The quantum, the subatomic, the elemental, and the very minerals
of the earth:

God loves things by becoming them!

The very waters that fall upon the earth, run through our rivers,
our bodies, and fill our oceans:

God loves things by becoming them!

The plants, the trees, all living and growing networks that root
into this earth:

God loves things by becoming them!

The animals in our skies, in our oceans, on the land,
all creatures great and small:

God loves things by becoming them!

Human beings: every race, nationality, status, sexuality,
or gender—ALL human bodies:

God loves things by becoming them!

The angels and the spirits, those that move in the unseen realms
and in other dimensions:

God loves things by becoming them!

The great planetary bodies, the galaxies, and the whole cosmic mystery:

God loves things by becoming them!

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The Love of Wonder

Dani Kruetter ('18)

Introduction

Like so many of you, I faced a time when my Christian tradition provided me inadequate answers to life's big questions. As someone identifying as an Enneagram 1 who needed to be "right," I was quickly launched into all that comes with the stage of "disorder." In the mess of it all, I began to see the importance of awe—the beautiful side of not having answers. I started to immerse myself in photography and see beauty all around me where I would never have seen it before. I can so easily see flaws and point out the need for improvement, so finding beauty and lingering in awe is a much-needed practice for me. Somewhere along the way, I began to collect quotes on the topic of awe and wonder. The quotes have come from poets, scientists, writers, naturalists, theologians, philosophers, and child development specialists; from mystics in the Jewish, Sufi, Taoist, Buddhist, and Christian traditions. Wonder has become one of my very favorite topics and I now realize it's something that unites us as humans. We have

all had these moments of awe, which, as Ken Wilber says, "speaks in the tongues of that God within, and inexplicably points home."

As I garnered these quotes, two common sources of the experience of wonder rose to the surface. I saw that people so often find these moments in *nature* and with *children*. Some very clever people, such as Rachel Carson, have brought these two worlds together. At the end of her life, Carson wrote a beautiful book about bringing children together with nature titled *The Sense of Wonder*. Annie Dillard once said that if you want to find something rare in nature, take a child along.

Here I give you a small glimpse of the photos and quotes I have collected. I invite you to stay with them for a bit of time, *visio divina* style, allowing the words and images to sink in. My hope is perhaps this experience will inspire you to be a bit more present with the moments of beauty in your own life, to ground yourself and allow mystery to overcome you.

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This capacity to wonder at trifles—no matter the imminent peril—these asides of the spirit, these footnotes in the volume of life are the highest forms of consciousness, and it is in this childishly speculative state of mind, so different from common sense and logic, that we know the world to be good. —Vladimir Nabokov



We don't know what's going on here. If these tremendous events are random combinations of matter run amok, the yield of millions of monkeys at millions of typewriters, then what

is it, in us, hammered out of those same typewriters, that they ignite?

—Annie Dillard



*Awe is the moment when ego surrenders to wonder.
—Terry Tempest Williams*



*We can never sneer at the stars,
mock the dawn, or scoff at
the totality of being. Sublime
grandeur evokes unhesitating,
unflinching awe. Away from
the immense, cloistered in our
own concepts, we may scorn
and revile everything. But
standing between earth and
sky, we are silenced by the
sight.*

—Abraham Joshua Heschel



*Go, said the bird, for the
leaves were full of children, /
Hidden excitedly, containing
laughter. / Go, go, go, said the
bird: humankind / Cannot
bear very much reality.*

—T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*



I believe in the existence of a mystery. —Iris Origo

Dani Walker Kreutter ('18) grew up on a farm in Indiana but now lives in Kampala, Uganda, with her husband and two children where they work with a community involved in youth leadership development programs and where she runs a Waldorf-inspired preschool. If you're interested in seeing more, you can follow her Instagram account [@theloveofwonder](https://www.instagram.com/theloveofwonder).

Interview with Cynthia Bourgeault

Mark Longhurst ('15)

Editor Mark Longhurst ('15) recently spoke with Living School faculty member Cynthia Bourgeault to hear about what projects she's been working on lately, her mentor Bruno Barnhart, her response to the Quarterly theme of "Nature: The First Bible," what Wisdom means to her, and more. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity. The full audio interview and unedited transcript are available at the end of this article.

Mark Longhurst: Thank you for taking some time, Cynthia, to talk to me and to the alumni community of the Living School. I want to start off by asking: What are you excited about right now, what are you working on lately?

Cynthia Bourgeault: There are a few things going on. I just had a book accepted for publication (to be released in 2020) on the imaginal realm. That will be a groundbreaker

and open new conversations as nobody in the Christian context seems to know much about this. Over the next year or so leading up to the book launch I'll be teaching on questions like "What is imaginal reality?" and "Why is it useful to Christians in general and to people in the Living School in particular?"

I'm also joining others connected to Thomas Keating's interspiritual legacy. Many people know the outstanding work Keating did with Centering Prayer and Contemplative Outreach, but his other great love in life was interspiritual, contemplative dialogue. This July in Colorado we're bringing together a group of people who were all formed and deeply influenced by him in this regard to honor his legacy and to listen deeply into what the next step forward is on this path that's so important for our world. (Learn more at aspenchapel.org.)

Mark: I'm sure I speak for many in the alumni community that we're waiting for your book with bated breath. I've known from your



Northeast Wisdom work that you have recently launched a "Year of Bruno Barnhart." Who was Bruno Barnhart, why did you choose to focus on him in this way, and what do you think he has to offer us in our time?

Cynthia: Bruno was a mentor of mine. For more than 30 years he was the abbot prior at the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, California; he was a gifted writer, thinker, and spiritual teacher. His three books *The Future of Wisdom*, *The Good Wine* (a commentary on John), and *Second Simplicity* are a wonderful trilogy that combines Teilhard with Eastern wisdom from the Bede Griffiths

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community. He is a clear non-dual Western thinker. Probably one of the best we have. But he wasn't widely known because he wasn't writing academic theology or popular theology or any kind of theology that gets supported by little groups that gather around and cheer. So, we just figured that it was time to put his work back out there! One of the younger colleagues in the Wisdom School got *The Future of Wisdom* back in publication.

There are a lot of treasures that are not known because the disseminators of scholarship and religious writings favor texts that can make the biggest splash. A lot of the really great teachers in all generations have always remained beneath the radar, and it takes some work to dig them out. Some of the finest are not widely known, and so it's important to create networks where their nuanced work can begin to infiltrate into the larger mix.

Mark: You refer to your work, including Wisdom Schools, as located in the Wisdom stream of the Christian lineage, and you said that Bruno Barnhart's *The Future of Wisdom* has inspired your own work. For folks who might not be familiar with this, how do you describe Wisdom?

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Cynthia: It's not knowing more but knowing deeper, knowing with more of you engaged. Wisdom works on an ancient pedagogy that supports the transformation of consciousness. You can't know more with simply your mind. Wisdom knowing involves intellectual knowing, emotional or feeling knowing, and sensation carried in the body. So, it's a three-centered balanced awareness that transforms consciousness and makes it possible to perceive in a way that's more than linear intellectual thought. The Wisdom tradition would say, basically, that non-duality is impossible until wisdom in not only attitude but physiology established in a being.

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The Wisdom branch is specifically interested in the transformation of consciousness. It's interested in non-duality, not so much as a theological or even psychological attitude, but as a whole new operating system of perception. The Wisdom tradition is distinguished from the contemplative tradition. It's more than doing Centering Prayer practice, Christian meditation, devotional practices, and *Lectio Divina*. Wisdom always asks: What transformations of being are these practices leading you into, and how does that result in the creation of a person who pays attention in a different way and acts in the world with a slightly different energetic presence?

Mark: That's really powerful, and I love the embodied nature of it, too. It passes right by the platonic dualism into a more holistic way of knowing.

Cynthia: Exactly. Some of us from a Wisdom perspective, would say that programs like the Living School, while very efficient for conveying information, just aren't set up for the transmittal of Wisdom. There's too much talking, too much mental absorbing, too much dialogue, too much debate. The real Wisdom routines and modalities are followed

most closely in places like Benedictine monasticism and the other monasticisms that balanced *ora et labora* (prayer and work) as not only a path of devotion but as a path of transformation.

Mark: Who might be a couple of key figures in the Wisdom Christian stream?

Cynthia: Well, Jesus, to start with! In the Gospel of Thomas and texts that have not been so heavily edited by the ecclesiastical cult, we see that Jesus was really about creating conscious human beings who were aware of their position in a relational field—which he called the Kingdom of Heaven—and were able to act out of it. Bruno Barnhart, Beatrice Bruteau, and Jacob Boehme certainly came from a Wisdom perspective. Most of the Quaker mystics are in there. The desert tradition was, I think, Christianity’s first and, in a way, most effective Wisdom tradition. I mean these guys were really about the transformation of being. That’s what they were doing out there in the desert. A lot of people we read in the Living School curriculum basically dance in and out of this, but often impressionistically, because it isn’t acknowledged theologically in our tradition. You know, when we talk about Wisdom, people think you’re talking about some books in the Old Testament.

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Mark: One of the themes running through this alumni magazine is “Nature: The First Bible,” which is taking inspiration from Richard’s book *The Universal Christ* but also from early church fathers who talked about the Book of Nature as a source of revelation. How do you envision God’s revelation through the natural world and how might some of your heroes, Panikkar and Teilhard de Chardin, have to say about the subject?

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Cynthia: Well, you know, Mark, if I were to be brutally honest I would say the whole question is jury-rigged from the start, because it starts from the good old Hebrew idea that God is separate from nature. Once you say that God is separate from nature then you can say, “Oh yes, but you can read God in nature,” and you can do all the wonderful panentheistic manipulations on it.

But in 1905, Einstein’s theory of relativity completely eliminated and knocked down that whole intellectual, critical basis of a separate God. We simply can no longer think in terms of a separate material world and a spiritual world. We have to think about a single continuum of energy and that God does not reside apart from this but is coextensive and comprehensive of the whole thing. God is residing not only in the things but in the spaces between the things, in the possibilities, and in the latencies. There is nothing that is not God, and nature is not a spot that God does not take up. The problem I’ve had with panentheism is that it is too weak a starting point. It’s saying, “Oh yeah, God can inhabit nature but doesn’t get stuck in it,” but you see that still is imagining an Old Testament God. That served its place in time, but simply does not exist anymore in any of the credible models that come to us from physics and mysticism.

The whole idea of that separate God is a beautiful creation of the dualizing mind that was tremendously important in its own time and era and carried human knowledge a huge step further. But I think that one of the things that's crippling Christianity today is that maybe we're just too weary to hack the tree right down to the roots where it needs to be hacked down. We still pay lip service to concepts that have no viable reality in the spiritual world anymore. It's time to make that happen. Start with the model of the relational field, of the holograph, of the boundless dimensions of reality, and the infinite creativity and fecundity of everything and somehow equate God with both the infinite potential and the excruciating particularity of the whole thing. But hold as your final point that it's in the relationality that anything emerges into actuality. Then I think you have a much better model for understanding both God and nature. Of course, nature is the book of God. Why has it taken so long for people to figure that out?

Mark: Let me ask you a follow up question about that. If you sort of break open the category of revelation in that way, how do the Scriptures situate themselves if all of reality is God revealing Godself all the time?

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Cynthia: Well, I would say that as in Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, what we bring our consciousness, love, and attention to we animate. I'm not trying to be simply subjective here and say that Scripture would have no validity if it weren't for our engagement with it. But over and over and over again through the legacy of our tradition people have seen that in this living dialogue between human beings and these texts a new quality of truth freshly emerges. So, I would not want to accord to them exclusive, separate status. Scriptures are another of the very rich, powerful, and particular viaducts through which God's presence is celebrated in this world.

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Mark: That's really helpful. One word that we learned in the Living School was "cosmotheandric" from Raimon Panikkar. Cosmotheandric sounds a little bit different than panentheism. Can you unpack that for the alumni?

Cynthia: You're exactly right on that and in a way ahead of a lot of theologians in understanding they are different. Even though denotatively they are basically described as the same thing, connotatively they are light years apart. Panentheism is a modification. It's in dialogue or in reactivity with pantheism or the old horror that God could be somehow trapped in nature. So, it's already a term whose loyalty and conceptual framework is found in the good old separation in the transcendent non-material God of our Western fame. Cosmotheandric talks more about the map that I was trying to describe a few minutes ago: the holographic, interpenetrating worlds within worlds; mutually indwelling dimensions within dimensions; a circling, giving, and receiving dynamic universe. Cosmotheandricism says that God is coextensive with all that.

Mark: In closing, what's inspiring you lately about the community and the movement that has been built up around your teachings?

Cynthia: It seems to me as I've studied the history of Wisdoms, Wisdom schools and traditions, that Wisdom has always been sort of a latent gene in the gene pool of humanity and of the planet. The Wisdom schools tend to come to the surface in times of either great political upheaval and global instability or times of great quantum leaps forward in consciousness. I think that in our own time we're seeing both. We certainly know that there's instability in climate change and in the nations and the institutions that have created stability for our planet. So, it's a perfect time for the emergence of Wisdom. We need to make it to a new level of consciousness or we're going to destroy ourselves.

These are prime opportunities for the emergence of Wisdom, which by its very nature will not be coopted. The nature of institutional transmission is that it tends to build institutions that begin to get doctrinally and procedurally heavy. There begins to be a party or company line. Wisdom by its very nature and self-understanding travels in much lighter and more flexible arrangements, which means that it can move more quickly. Wisdom is also interested in the energetic transmission of ideas and the energetic impact of addressing a situation politically, not by a manifesto or a march, for example, but by a concentrated ability to articulate a heart energy and place it in a location so that the nature of the situation changes. These are the kinds of skills of the energetic level that have always been transmitted in the great Wisdom schools, and I think we're seeing a reemergence of that. It's one of the reasons why I have so insistently proclaimed to people that the Living School is not a pluralistic level of consciousness. While we are politically and contemplatively involved, we're not a "mean green" school that's taking sides, demonizing, and judging. In what we're beginning to learn at the Living School, there are the seeds to be the artists of new becoming using the tools of energy, presence, and attention rather than anger, zealotry, idealism, and polarizing.

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Mark: Can you give an example of what change looks like on this imaginal, Wisdom level? We're so used to thinking about change as what I can effect through my effort, and you're talking about something else. Can make that concrete for us?

Cynthia: Well, how did Pope Francis get elected? Impossible, you know. The emergence of the Taizé community came out of nowhere. I've documented a few of these in my book, but it very often will seem to come out of left field where something that was not linearly possible, given the configuration. All of a sudden the configuration shifts for no particular reason, and it's a whole new ballgame.

Mark: And I'm also hearing that in your Wisdom work this means holistically attuning the body, heart, mind to operate on that energetic level.

Cynthia: I think there are so many changes and close saves in the history of the planet that we don't even see because the people who worked in this kind of way liked to keep their heads below the radar. And, you know, it's a really important piece of the forward moving operation to stand up there, put the word out, and get millions of people

thinking in new ways. But the finest pointed work is always done completely inconspicuously. There is an old Yiddish saying that the world at any given point in time has been held on its orbit by 36 conscious human beings. We're not even sure that they're one of the 36 and certainly they don't know each other. The quality of their work rises like incense and connects with help that's also flowing to us from the other side, from the Watchers and Holy Ones that are always protecting this planet, because it's important. This planet is precious and valued irreplaceable in the overall dynamism of divine manifestation.

Mark: I find that profoundly hopeful. Thank you.

Cynthia: To be a part of that, you have to give up your egoic gratification. I'm not saying that in a small or mean-spirited sense. I mean that the more you have enough being to work inconspicuously, the more likely and more efficiently your work is going to connect with the places where the work is being done.

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Mark: It's bringing cause and effect to an entirely different field.

Cynthia: Exactly, because only in this world is cause and effect linear. In imaginal causality it's spatial, and it's, as I say in the book, chiasmic. They're balanced poles in a single larger picture. And so that's the part that as you begin to learn to completely retrain and restructure your being to become permeable to that way of seeing, being, and acting, and in some sense become coherent and consistent with it, a whole different cone of possibility opens up within a person for impact upon and within the world.

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[Listen to full interview](#)



[View full transcript](#)

FIRST ADVENT (Ex Nihilo)

Alana Levandoski ('15)

Before there were bells to ring
There was a hum, a resonance
That gathered, and peaked
And sang like a bowl for all time

In spacious emptiness
Without form we danced and we flowed
In love, in love
And then our love overflowed
Ex nihilo
Ex nihilo

This is the beautiful, dangerous way
To have our being at this density
So we risk when we love
'Cause if we're living, one day we will die

All of this came from that emptiness
Pressed into each particular form
Manifested to touch and embrace
Because love overflows
Ex nihilo
Ex nihilo

There is no end to the love that's inside
What if letting it out is the fullness of life?
To hear the call, deep within
From our great self-emptying Lover

And to fail and to fall into those infinite arms
Where love condenses from stardust to blood
Pulsing through every heart beat
Because love overflows
Ex nihilo
Ex nihilo



[Listen to the song](#)

Alana Levandoski ('15) is a contemplative Christian composer, song and chant writer. Her particular interest is in using music's illuminating power to catch glimpses of incarnation in and through all of life. Leading up to Advent 2018, she was inspired to write a fresh take on the season. Alana crafted this song to harken back to the mystery of origin, what Fr. Richard calls "the First Incarnation," almost 14 billion years ago.



[Watch full video](#)



[View full transcript](#)

The Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis is Senior Minister at Middle Collegiate Church and President of The Middle Project. She is an activist, preacher, and fierce advocate for racial equality, economic justice, and LGBTQIA+ equality. She has been adjunct professor at several seminaries and is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She is the co-author of The Pentecost Paradigm: Ten Strategies for Becoming a Multiracial Congregation, author of The Power of Stories, and is working on a memoir about finding a grown-up God.

How Do We Move Things Forward within Institutions that Constrain Us?

Jacqui Lewis at The Universal Christ conference

In the below talk from Jacqui Lewis at CAC's March 2019 Conference, she teaches about activism as a spiritual practice, and developing healing strength amidst institutional containers of systemic injustice.

Note: All of The Universal Christ conference videos are available for attendees and alumni to view and download. Please refer to the instructions provided via email.

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“Can I Have That Rock?”

Liz Walz ('18) on streaming the Universal Christ conference

“Can I have *that* rock, the one over there? I mean, I know *all* rocks bear the Divine imprint, but that’s the rock I poured oil on during Thursday’s liturgy. I have a door at home that won’t stay open; I’ve been looking for something to prop it.”

The question came on Sunday afternoon—at the conclusion of the final gathering of the Universal Christ conference streamed live at Genesis Spiritual Life & Conference Center in Westfield, Massachusetts. Twenty-four of us gathered to participate in the Holy Week presentations and liturgies observed over the course of four days. A few hours earlier we had celebrated Christ’s Resurrection, and ours, with new understanding: both individual *and* universal. Lunch was over, the final liturgy and blessing had ended. Amidst expressions of gratitude for the conference itself, the

gift of experiencing it in community, and newfound kindred spirits, the question was asked.

“Yes, of course.”

Minutes later, after four similar interactions, five rocks had been walked out of the room. One rock remained, and I admit, secretly, I was glad to have it. Every thing bears Christ’s imprint. And. It’s easier for us to see it in some things than in others. We are all in process.

One participant shared, *The anointing of the rock and each other was very powerful for me, especially in the way the ritual and the readings connected Jacob’s anointing of the rock after his “ladder dream” and Paul’s “the rock was Christ” in 1 Corinthians and Richard’s words earlier, “Christ is the anointing of reality with divine presence.”*

Another wrote, *I appreciated Father Richard saying: Our understanding of us being in Christ is not meant to be an individual experience but to invite*

us to help others to see the Christ in themselves and the world. It is so helpful to recognize the crucified Christ in the suffering of my family and friends and neighbors and to reach out in love toward them. Christ serving Christ in others. Matthew 24:40.

Others expressed: *I will leave this conference recalling Rev. Jacqui Lewis’ questions and challenges: Where/for what need would you be willing to die so that Love may live? We tell ourselves that we cannot change the power of Empire. We must resurrect the Crucified Body of Christ today!*

This seminar has surpassed my expectations as a non-practicing Catholic for many years. The speakers have given me a feeling of belonging to a much larger community that accepts all people no matter what their religious beliefs are.

Rohr said Christ is the “external, infinite outpouring of God and the suffering of God.” Combining these two was an insight for me.

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I felt commissioned in the closing blessing when Richard said, “May you move from seeing to recognizing. . . . May God amplify your light as we love the world.”

And with that, it ended; the participants departed to return to their lives.

At home, Sunday evening the text message came: “Our Genesis Conscious Contact meeting has lost another kindred soul. She was pronounced dead Sunday afternoon in her new apartment. Please hold her loved ones close to your heart.”

And just like that: the Christ. Outpouring of love and suffering. I know that young woman bore Christ’s imprint, was held in love by Christ, and even at times had shone the Light of Christ on others. But she forgot. And in that moment, her life on this earth was ended. And it hurts.

“No one is free while others are oppressed. No one is saved until we all are saved.” Rev. Jacqui Lewis shared this sentiment in observance of Good Friday. Now, days later on Easter Sunday, it comes home. Yes, we recognize the rock is sacred. All visible matter bears God’s blueprint

and is Christ. But until everyone knows it, we are not there yet. Christ in the tomb is still Christ—my overdosed acquaintance is still Christ. Yet like the women at the tomb, we are grieving a life ended at far too young an age.

Liz Walz ('18) is an Associate of the Sisters of Providence, Executive Director of Genesis Spiritual Life and Conference Center in Westfield, MA and a 2018 sendee of the Living School.

Listening

George and Matilda Angusa ('18)

We do not know exactly how we arrived at this point in our creative process.



As artists who work in ceramics and wood respectively, we have also been collaborating for a number of years now creating sculptures. We have mostly used natural wood that we have sourced in the Balele Mountains of Northern Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa, and have used it in the figures we’ve created. Branches and trunks have found expression in limbs and bodies.

This way of creating was a very natural extension flowing from our love of and sensitivity to nature. Nature touches us on a very deep level and when we started our small retreat centre with our respective studios, a beautiful setting was very important to us. People who attend our retreats or workshops against this backdrop often find deep healing without us necessarily doing something. We often say that our role for the most part is merely being custodians of the space.

The stone that is generally found in the area is a type of sandstone with a very high iron content, locally known as iron stone. It is extremely hard and when our house and studios were built more than a century ago, that was also the building material used. Initially we mainly used the

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stone as bases for our ceramic and wood sculptures, but gradually and without a conscious decision on our part they became part of the sculptures themselves. At a recent exhibition there was almost a complete reversal of roles between wood and stone with ceramics and stone being prominent in our figures of people and birds and wood like Rhodesian teak, cherry, and Panga Panga used for the bases.

How do the sculptures take shape? There is not one recipe. At times we'll have the head that we've made from clay and when we then go down to the stream flowing a little distance from our house, we'll keep our eyes open for a stone body that will go with it. On other occasions the stone will be found first and carried up to the studio where a face or head of a bird will be shaped around it.

As a general rule, we try to manipulate or shape the stone as little as possible, but when asked for we do sculpting using diamond cutting disks and tungsten carbide drill bits.

It is a very organic process with contemplative listening forming an



integral part. You become sensitive to the forms, texture, and colour of stone. You get into the habit of looking intently over the sides when driving over low water bridges to determine what stones are to be found in the riverbed. Driving to town from the farm, you will suddenly stop in the middle of the dirt road, open the door and, without unbuckling your seat belt, lean out and lift the beautiful stone that has surfaced during a recent road grading into the car.

Inhabitants of our little village Wakkerstroom have also developed “the eye” and will drive around with a bag full of boulders in the trunk of their car for the next time they see us.

While creating our sculptures we enter into a conversation with rocks and stones where we are the listeners. At this stage we are led into creative spaces where stones announce themselves as the silent, slender body of a monk, the plumage of a chicken, or the torso of an opera singer. But gradually we are also being guided beyond simile, comparison, labelling, and personification into mere experience, awareness, and being.

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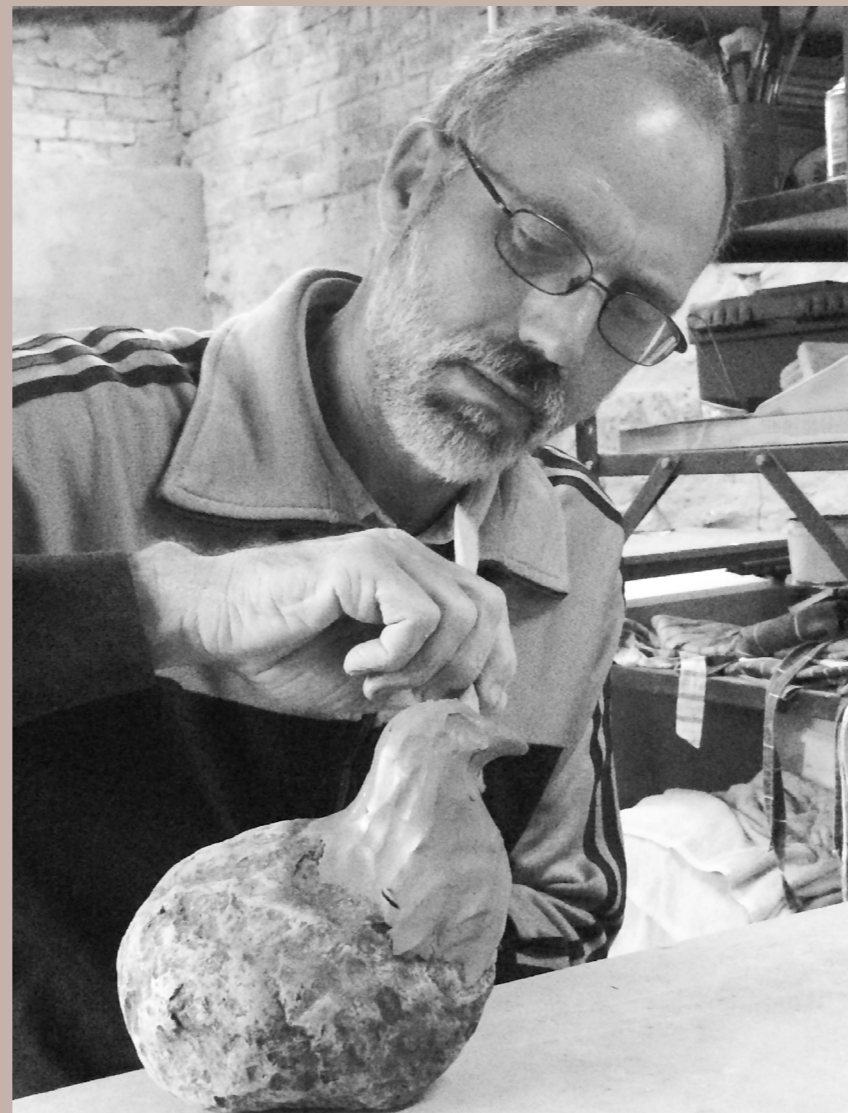
Where we resonate deeply with the thought that it is the love of God that lends weight to stones.

When we do stone balancing sessions down at the river, it is that love and weight that settle the stones in dimples and indents on top of each other, often to astonishing heights and shapes. These free-standing structures seem so delicate and fragile but will remain intact for weeks until a grazing calf or water mongoose pushes them over.

Rocks and stones ground us, weigh us down until we discover that where we are, right here, is the place to build an altar. We take up the ancient baton that our predecessors who built our houses, walls, and castles; erected megalithic structures like Stonehenge, the Ring of Brodgar, the Proleek Dolmen, the Standing Stones of Lundin, and the Poulnabrone Dolmen; and who carved the heads of Easter Island are holding out to us. We are made fully human, part of

this earth, through our contact with rocks and the questions they pose.

George and Matilda Angus live in the Balele Mountains of northern Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa. They run a small retreat center, The Restory, and have studios where they work in clay, wood, and stone. More information can be found in their blog, The Restory News, at restorynews.blogspot.com.



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Being with Animals

Linda Hand ('16)

*I once spoke to my friend, an old squirrel, about the Sacraments—
he got so excited. . . .
And I just smiled and said, “Yes dear,
you understand:
everything imparts
His grace.”
—Francis of Assisi [1]*

My name is Linda Hand, Living School alumna from the 2016 cohort. I am interested in and inspired by the understanding that animals are a path of healing spirituality. When I was young, my dog was a point of safety and a sense of Love for me no matter what was happening in my life. As far back as I can remember and to now, I have had at least one pet and sometimes as many as sixteen pets at the same time. Teachers and mystics like St. Francis, Fr. Richard Rohr, Thomas Merton, James Finley, Bill Plotkin, and Ilia Delio—to name a few—have shared their understanding around animals and nature for our healing awareness.

In the Living School we were invited to share our practice. For a while I struggled to identify mine. I then realized the daily ritual of putting fresh water and food out for the animals that cross my bit of acreage was my practice. Reflecting on my compassion for the animals has enriched my life. Taking care of my daughter's horse, Quick Silver, was one of the most healing experiences. Daily feed, water, hay, and taking care of his feet were restorative routines. His clear eyes and quiet intuitive spirit of Love were very touching. I would braid his tail and mane as a sacrament not unlike praying the rosary. Each time I cared for Silver it was God in him that I was rinsing, feeding, or caring for his feet. The God in me there for him. My husband and I fed fish to a mother hawk and her babies for two years. She

would watch us and come take fish from a tree stump. I felt the same Holy exchange with all the animals that have shared water and food from my hands and heart.

At my last session of the Living School, in a question and response session Jim Finley was sharing with us about Jean Vanier, L'Arche, and compassion. Jim quoted Vanier, who talked about how we don't know what to do with our own pain and that we need to welcome our weakness. Jim explained how being open to the kinship of recognition allows us to respond with compassion to the suffering world. Psychology, brain activity, and the limbic system all play a part in this mystical union with God. In the limbic system are millions of neural pathways holding internalized images which stir deep emotions touching survival. One way of looking at it is that God touches us mystically in our limbic system. Jim goes on to say, “We are moved with tenderness toward the preciousness of ourselves.” I believe animal tenderness is an opening to a deep presence touching us that cannot be adequately thought of intellectually.

Contemplating what Jim Finley shared has helped me recognize what is within me that is awakened by the animals' presence. I have started a blog with my own pictures, videos, and sentiments in which I continue this healing journey: animal-tenderness.com.

Linda Hand ('16) continues a path of healing through spiritual direction, quantum entanglement, and love of God in animals.

[1] *Francis of Assisi, imaginatively rendered by Daniel Ladinsky, Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West (Penguin Compass: 2002), 53. Used with permission.*

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Getting the Earth's Sacredness Right Every Earth Day

Gary Paul Nabhan ('16)

What if getting our relationship right with the Earth and all its creatures is not the scenic backdrop of some circus sideshow but as crucial as getting our relations right with our Creator, our family, and our neighbors? What if all of Creation is the most palpable expression of our Creator's generosity, sense of wonder, and commitment to diversity? What happens if we begin to include the fungi, the flowers, the fritillary butterflies, and the flocks of wild geese as our neighbors, our family, and our Creator's expressive face?

Nearly fifty years ago, as a seventeen-year-old, I worked as a volunteer doing articles, graphics, and cartoons for the Environmental Action news magazine at the headquarters for the initial Earth Day. I was one of a dozen youth and young adults who worked there, preparing for the participation of twenty million people around the world in the first-ever global recognition of the Earth's sacredness and its vulnerability. Some of the staff were veterans of Civil Rights Summer in the South; others were conscientious objectors who wanted to "study war no more." We were out to do something affirmative, something inclusive—not a protest, but a celebration.

On Earth Day itself, I was sent to a small Catholic college near the Mississippi River to be the youngest presenter at a campus-wide convocation. A young nun greeted me and asked if I had ever given a speech before. I nodded my head side to side, unable to even speak the word "no." The nun held my hand and said, "Don't get jittery, honey, just pretend you are offering a prayer, talking to God, giving thanks. As long as you don't get into issues like overpopulation and abortion, I think you'll be okay."

I don't think I knew much of anything about abortion at that time, so it was easy to follow her advice.

I have no idea what I said that day. I simply looked out the windows above the assembly, watching eagles move among the towering trees growing along the banks of a tributary of the Mississippi as the water moved forward and blended into the Big Muddy itself.

Whatever words I spoke were directed toward those eagles as much as they were to the humans assembled there that day; to the catfish in the river as much as to the Christian community; a call of the wild as much as a call for a communion of all races, faiths, and classes.

Actually, I can't recall that *any* words spilled out my mouth that morning. I am not at all sure that my voice

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was heard—let alone remembered—by anyone present that first Earth Day morning, but that did not matter much to me. I felt as though I was present at the dawning of Creation, at the first sanctioned gathering of two-leggeds, four-leggeds, winged ones, and rooted ones where all came to express their joy in being part of this sacred place that was careening through space and time.

It is true: *whenever any of us feels that gratitude for all of Earth's creatures, we have become fully Present, fully alive ourselves.*

That may be what Saint Francis of Assisi meant when he urged us to “go out and preach the Good News and only when necessary use words.”

Gary Paul Nabhan aka Brother Coyote is a professed member of the Ecumenical Order of Franciscans, a graduate of the Living School, a conservation biologist, orchard-keeper, and story-teller.

A Xennial Franciscan

Rhett Engelking ('16)

I professed as a Secular Franciscan ten years ago because I was seeking spiritual depth in my life and the wisdom of a mystic who humbly immersed himself in the lives of struggling people resonated with me quite deeply. It was an aspirational gesture toward a spirituality I may never fully embody, but I suppose there is never a right response to life's mysteries, only the right intention. My intention was to live in better harmony with Creation.

I am a member of the micro-generation of individuals (xennials) who became adults just as at the Information Age was taking shape. When I professed, it was in direct response to a severe feeling of eco-anxiety I was feeling at the time. This eco-anxiety seemed to be part of a collective aversive response to the stress of a rapidly changing climate and technological landscape. The ten hottest years in average global temperature have occurred since I turned eighteen. I also recall a full life before the ubiquity of the worldwide web, yet I was also fully groomed in what Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si* termed the emerging [technocratic paradigm](#). My natural response to the changes was technophilia (binging on the new technologies) and agoraphobia (removing myself from the dynamic social and ecological landscape). By grace, I realized that the God who was seeking me could not be contained in virtual reality and could not exist solely in a life of privacy. Ultimately the simplicity of a Franciscan way of life served as an antidote to these two fixations in particular.

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In 2013, I left a job in recreational therapy at a psychiatric hospital because I believed that the answer to the eco-anxiety that I had personally been experiencing was both a spiritual and a political one. As a recreational therapist I would regularly facilitate encounters with both community and nature as a means of fostering deeper self-awareness and personal transformation. While there is a spiritual and political dimension to these encounters, incarnational spirituality and political power were not really appropriate topics of discussion at a secular treatment facility.

I believed in 2013, as I do now, that there is inherent power in an awareness of Christ's presence in all of Creation and that this awareness leads to profound social change. This message is at the heart of *Laudato Si*, and the efforts of faith-based advocacy groups in spreading its message profoundly shaped the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. Presently, I work on ecology, immigration, and anti-racism efforts in the Justice and Peace office of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM). CMSM is an organization that essentially facilitates the common voice and activity of male Catholic religious leadership in the United States. Powerful legislators still haven't gotten the message on the dangers of consumerism, capitalism, and climate change (neither have the majority of Catholics).

I live in the Assisi Community of Washington, D.C., an [intentional community](#) that was founded in 1986 as a space for

community members to live out the Gospel call for peace and justice. Mutual interdependence is a core aspect of Franciscan spirituality so, at Assisi, we: engage in vegetarianism, composting, and other sustainability practices; share chores and the expenses of the living space; engage in regular morning prayer; and share meals nightly at a community table. I had no family support system in the D.C. area, and so I hoped to experiment with Gospel orthopraxy in this community of lay and religious Catholics.

Assisi is a multi-generational, multi-gender, multi-racial, and (at times) multi-national community. With every new resident, we have a new opportunity to discern nonviolent solutions to real world struggles collectively. I remain at Assisi because it is essential for me to be able to speak from experience about good faith solutions that can actually work in a domestic setting with people from diverse backgrounds. I must say that I join those who have personally struggled in the current national political and religious climate. At this time, I do feel called to be near to the seats of power and I take solace in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "The time is always right to do what is right."

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Play Structures for Disadvantaged Children in Indonesia: An Integration Project

Marc-André von Allmen and Aprile Denise ('17)

Our Vision: “To bring joy, place, and learning, by establishing a child-friendly library...”

Establishing a playground and child-friendly library for the wellbeing of children in a remote community in Flores, Indonesia

The idea for this project began at the Living School Symposium of August 2016 with a conversation between Marc-André and Aprile about developing play structures for disadvantaged children. We had both travelled or lived in impoverished areas of the world, so we discussed how we could reach out to meet the needs of young children to bring joy into their lives despite their circumstances. While we recognized

children’s basic needs also have to be met for food, clean water, and shelter, our hope was to give children in a disadvantaged community the opportunity to access the joy of play through the implementation of a child-friendly playground.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates in Article 31:

“Every child should have the right to play.”

Play is crucial to a child’s emotional, physical, social, and creative growth. Many scientific studies have also shown the importance of play for healthy brain development in children. We also believed that providing children opportunities to play reflects the Franciscan way of being present to life, allowing the Spirit of life and love to flow into the hearts of the most vulnerable to experience this joy and freedom.

Description of Project

Our project evolved over time into two sections, which comprised the development of a playground as well as a child-friendly library in an impoverished location of Indonesia. In February 2017, we began conversations about the project with Father Mike Peruhe, Provincial Head of the Franciscan Community based in Jakarta. We had decided to partner



with the Franciscan Community in Indonesia in order to continue to live the Franciscan spirit felt during the Living School.

Location

Fr. Mike identified a Franciscan-supported community on the island of Flores, in West Manggarai, in the remote village of Tentang, an 8-hour drive from Labuan Bajo. The island of Flores is among the poorest regions of Indonesia, where agriculture and fishing are important sources of income. Following discussions with the Franciscan Community about the plan to build a playground, we were also asked if we could help with strengthening their literacy programs in Flores, so we decided to add a children’s library as well. The friendship that developed with the Franciscan Community in Indonesia became a significant and memorable outcome of our integration project.

Visits

On our first visit that August, Marc-André travelled from Switzerland

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and Aprile came from Bali to meet the community, share our ideas, and carry out an initial needs assessment to determine the feasibility of building a small playground and library in the selected location.

We were welcomed with open arms by the whole Tentang Community who greeted us warmly with a traditional welcome, songs, music, and gifts. We discovered that this rural area has about 500 primary-aged children and a significant number walk long distances to attend school. After our first visit, we developed a sound fundraising proposal that incorporated our research, design plans, and information about the community and children, and we were successful in raising the funds we needed to support the project.

Library Opening & Playground

Planning

On our second visit to Tentang, we had the twofold purpose of opening the community children's library as well as planning the playground. A local builder worked on the infrastructure for the library, including bookshelves and tables, and we provided over 500 engaging books for young children.

A librarian was appointed from the Franciscan community to supervise it, keep a careful track of the books, and provide many opportunities for the

children to visit the library.

We then began designing the layout and structures for the playground with the help of an architect from the Franciscan Community and a team of four local builders. The actual building of the playground took four months, from the procurement of the wood, the clearing/leveling of the land, creating the structures, and building the connecting bridges. Gradually we saw the playground take shape through the sharing of photos. Much of the final design and colors were the inspiration of the community, and the playground ended up being bright and vibrant.

By late November 2018 Marc-André and Aprile returned to Tentang for the opening. The children presented traditional dances and songs, and finally the highlight of the opening was the opportunity for children to use their playground for the very first time.

Reflection on the Project

Our integration project was for us far more than just the completion of a library and playground. We spent many hours in conversation and reading, reflecting on the importance of imagination and play in a child's life. Our intuition that these aspects are deeply embedded in our spirit as human beings continued to grow

and deepen with the project.

While we knew the research on play pointed to healthy brain development in children, we felt equally certain play engendered a deep happiness, a connection to the heart, and a being totally present to the moment. We watched children absorbed in their world of play, living moments of joy without needing anything else. As a result we have seen through play that something is deeply mirrored within us to experience this spiritual freedom, joy, and happiness. The spirit of the Living School will remain with us through this Integration Project for a lifetime.

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Aprile Denise ('17), a New Zealand citizen living in Indonesia, has worked in Indonesia for more than twenty years in education and is currently a literacy consultant and teacher trainer involved in local school literacy and library implementation programs in various remote areas of Indonesia.

Marc-André von Allmen ('17), a Swiss citizen living in Switzerland, has been working for ten years for different international NGOs and for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) which develops and implements cooperation aid in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.

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Paterson

Debonee Morgan ('15)

Jim Jarmusch's *Paterson* (2016) will not excite you. It may, however, create a beautiful resonance, quivering through that place in your heart where beauty interlaces with matchboxes and beer.

It's just a quiet little film about one week in the life of a guy named Paterson (Adam Driver) who drives a bus in Paterson, New Jersey, and creates poetry in his "secret book." His girlfriend, Laura, bakes cupcakes and spends her days creating decorative art in patterns of black and white while dreaming of becoming the new Tammy Wynette. Their bulldog, Marvin, accompanies Paterson on his nightly walks to the local bar where he has a beer and shares a few exchanges with the locals. If we measure life by activity, accomplishment, and excitement, we'd have to say that absolutely nothing happens.

Attention, however, draws us closer to see the depth and contrast in patterns of language, imagery, and

action. Recurring motifs pull us toward repetition, shadow, and twins.

Paterson and his hero, poet William Carlos Williams—author of the long form poem, "Paterson"—live with the credo "no ideas but in things." Filmmaker Jarmusch is a poet, introducing us to the things of protagonist Paterson . . . a poet, introducing us to the things of William Carlos Williams . . . a poet, introducing us to the things of Paterson, NJ.

The opening scene has Laura tell Paterson about her dream where they have twins who have twins. Then, throughout the film we see fifteen different images of twins, easily absorbed in the narrative of ordinary days and not particularly unusual. Walking through a world of duality that is also sameness, Paterson writes lines such as, "It is the first day of Spring / or the last day of Winter . . ." and holds them together.

The shadows are literal and metaphoric, with occasional dialogue references such as "Those kids

were shadows for Halloween." His walk takes him through the sunlit afternoon and then through a series of short dim tunnels. The morning sun creates bands of light and dark on the loving couple. We hear a distant siren during Paterson's peaceful walk home.

Most striking, though, is how Paterson's mindful and attentive existence is lovingly bound to the Black and White. Laura's obvious obsession with these colors is charming and delightful for Paterson. His consistent acceptance and encouragement remind us of a good life—living with the blessings and the curses and loving each thing as we encounter it.

And let us remember the Trinity: Pater, Son, and Holy Everything.

—*Debonee Morgan ('15)*

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I loved the liturgies and Richard's reflections during them. I was moved by and attracted to Janet McKenzie's paintings. They provided a sort of visio divina experience of the Resurrected Christ for me. —Tim Lawrence ('15)

My circle processing group has met for an annual self-led retreat each year since we were sent. This year, our gathering coincided with The Universal Christ conference, so we watched three different talks, including two by Richard and one by Rev. Jacqui Lewis. Each talk inspired hours of powerful, moving conversation and vulnerability as we further discerned together how we are being called to show up in the world as active contemplatives.

—Alison Bush Kirkpatrick ('16)

I took very few notes because it was such a profound experience. The Universal Christ book and conference webcast are like New Seeds of Contemplation by Merton. Most of the lines make me want to stop and be silent. —William Brennan ('15)



There was so much in the conference that resonated with me. I was struck hard by John Dominic Crossan's thoughts on the commercialization of the Sea of Tiberius as another way to abuse the poor while filling the coffers of Rome. As an African-American, this possibility heightens the threat of Jesus to the status quo. —Leslye Colvin ('20)

The entire message took us all back to the basics of Fr. Richard's wisdom. For me, there was the experience of coming home to both the ground of my faith and what Fr. Richard has long preached. —Roy Hoagland ('18)

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MEDITATION WITH CHILDREN

Alana Levandoski ('15) is currently releasing a new album called *Meditation with Children*. To find out more information, visit alanalevandowski.com.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Casa Alma, Catholic Worker, Charlottesville, Virginia, is seeking resident volunteers to join in community for a one-year, renewable time of service beginning in summer or fall of 2019. Singles and couples of any sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or faith background are welcome! Casa Alma provides housing and support to low-income families, cultivates an urban homestead, convenes times of prayer and learning, and works for peace and justice. Contact Lara Snyder Brown ('16) at cvillecw@gmail.com and visit casa-alma.org for more information.

CENTERING PRAYER AND PRISONERS

Dennis McCain ('15) caught up with Prison Contemplative Fellowship founder Ray Leonardini at The Universal Christ conference for a brief interview to share about the power of teaching Centering Prayer to prisoners.



[Watch full video](#)



[View full transcript](#)

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YOUR NEWS UPDATES

Have a shout-out, event, project, gratitude, or prayer to share? Send your news updates to mlonghurst@cac.org by July 8.

CONSPIRE 2020 AND ALUMNI GATHERING

May 14-17, 2020
Albuquerque, New Mexico

In March, Michael Poffenberger shared that we'd made the difficult decision to delay the final CONSPIRE conference and alumni event to next spring. We received dozens of emails expressing the impact that shift had on you along with your support as we learn to work in a more contemplative way. We're grateful for your understanding!

We've confirmed the new dates for CONSPIRE 2020: May 15-17, at the Albuquerque Convention Center. Please consider coming a day early—May 14—to attend a special Alumni Gathering to connect with each other and hear from our faculty. We'll let you know when details are available sometime this fall.

Job Openings

As the CAC continues to grow, we're on the lookout for passionate, talented people to join our team. Current full-time job opportunities include:

Director of Production and Outreach
Multimedia Content Creator

Learn more, share with others, and apply at cac.org.

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Future Submissions

The August issue of the Living School Alumni Quarterly will focus on Addiction. Editor Mark Longhurst ('15) invites your articles, personal reflections, poems, photographs, and more. Send them to mlonghurst@cac.org by July 8.

Stay Connected



A Special Thanks

To all alumni contributors, to artist **Janet Mackenzie** for permission to use *Jesus of the People* and *The Resurrection*, to **Cynthia Bourgeault** for a heart and mind-expanding interview, and to the CAC Team that works on the Quarterly: **Joelle Chase, Morgan Overton, Nicholas Kramer, Izzy Spitz** and **Paul Thompson**.

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