



Two weeks ... two ordinations!

The diocese had a plethora of ordinations in the latter half of November. Michelle Bull and Susan Slater were ordained as transitional deacons on the Feast of St Hilda, November 17 at the Cathedral Church of All Saints in Halifax. And Colin Nicolle was priested on November 30th, the Feast of St. Andrew at St. Mary's Church, Summerside, PEI.

Photo right: Deacons Susan Slater and Michelle Bull standing with Bishop Ron Cutler who is flanked by Deacon Colin Nicolle and Subdeacon Cate Ratcliffe with Bishop's Chaplain Ginny Wilmhoff behind.

Photo below: Rev. Colin Nicolle with Bishop Ron Cutler at his ordination to the priesthood in Summerside, PEI.

See page 4 for more details.



Silent witness vigil

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

SUBMITTED BY MARY STONE

On December 2nd, during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the Parish of French Village Mothers' Union held a 2 hour 'Silent Witness' Vigil to bring attention to all gender-based violence, but particularly violence against women and girls. The vigil was held outdoors near Highway 3 in Upper Tantallon. It began with prayers by Rev Brianna Andrews, followed by the

lighting of 14 candles. As each participant lit a candle she/he read a prayer related to a particular aspect of gender-based violence. After a blessing by Rev Brianna, MLA Denise Peterson-Rafuse spoke thoughtfully about the issue of gender based violence. Since 1990, 51 women in Nova Scotia have been murdered by their spouse or intimate partner. The Society for Silent Witness Nova Scotia raises awareness of the realities of domestic violence. By creating life size, red, wooden silhouettes of a murdered woman with their story printed on a shield

on the front, the society is helping to provide a voice for these women to tell their story and to raise awareness about violence in our communities. With this awareness it is hoped communities will become active in having open conversations and promoting positive actions to bring healing and an end to domestic violence. We were honored to have the silhouettes of Paula Gallant and Linda Boudreau at our vigil. It was a meaningful and moving event.

Photo: The Mothers' Union outdoor vigil kiosk in Tantallon.



COLUMNIST

And a little child shall lead them

I must share our Christmas with you. Especially the Christmas Tableau as Father J called it. More like a three ring circus my Orin was heard to say. Jason wanted to involve the whole congregation in the Christmas story and worked with our own small Sunday school as well as the Choir and the Ladies Guild, the Altar Guild and the Men's Club. He had this idea in his head of us telling the Christmas story with words, Bible readings and song.

The children of the Sunday school would take the part of the lesser characters in the Nativity narrative, the older kids would do some of the readings and he asked two adults to take the parts of Joseph and Mary. The star of the show was a real live baby nestled in the manger. That baby had a head of bright red hair and big blue eyes. Yes, you guessed it, Charlie was to be the new born Babe. The only problem was that Charlie was now 5 months old and starting to get quite active. His idea of fun was to roll over, a new trick he had mastered in the last few days and weeks. Charlie was not going to nestle quietly in the manger on a bed of straw, especially with all the activity going on around him.

Miranda was to be Mary. It



ST. BART'S BY THE BOG

Sarah Neish

was felt that she could control a very busy baby Jesus better than anyone else. Because Jason would be doing his "thing" i.e. reading the Gospel narrative from the pulpit, he had asked High and Mighty Jim to take the part of Joseph. Jim had a full beard and the look of an Old Testament prophet about him. Put a tea towel over his head and a striped dressing gown on him and voila ...Joseph...

The little ones were sheep and angels and shepherds with a cow thrown in for good measure. They all looked adorable ,the homemade costumes were works of art and every Granny and Granddad

showed up to witness this great piece of drama . The church was full with standing room only in the back of St. Bart's

The choir had two anthems prepared for the event and the Sunday school had been working on "Away in a Manger", their special song to sing to the Baby Jesus.

Father J chose the fourth Sunday in Advent for the performance. Sunday afternoon seemed like a good time to hold it because so many of the actors were very young and not at their best as the day turned into evening and bedtimes drew near. The Ladies Guild had a feast waiting in the Hall for after the play, Candy canes and fancy cookies for the kids, sandwiches and tea for the grown-ups.

The afternoon of the performance arrived and so we began...Mary and Joseph and the baby took their places at the manger and Fr. J began to read the Christmas story from St. Luke. The choir hummed quietly in the background and at the right time the shepherds walked slowly down the aisle, some of the sheep got loose and ran about and the cow kept stumbling over his/her costume that was a bit too long in the legs. A tiny angel wandered over to a parent for a hug before continuing

down to the Manger scene and the star of the show...the red headed baby in the manger decided to peek over the edge to see what was happening! Mary and Joseph did their best to control the curious baby but he really wanted to see everyone and that was that! Finally Mary picked him up and held him in her arms.... then the Baby Jesus began to show the world his new trick. He began to giggle and wave to us all.

Jason was still in the pulpit and couldn't understand why everyone in the pews started to laugh and wave their hands. He read on with his best Gospel voice and the choir sang "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" at the right moment. The Sunday school did their own version of "Away in a Manger" and baby Jesus waved his arms so that I could have sworn he was conducting them.

It was the best Christmas gift we could have received. It may not have been as Jason had pictured it but it was perfect!

I hope that you were blessed with a vision of a baby in His mother's arms, waving at you because that is what Christmas is all about.

Blessings from St Bart's by the Bog,
Aunt Madge



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TERRIBLE DISCOVERIES

THE BEAMS ARE ROTTEN AND COULD COLLAPSE AT ANY MOMENT

OUR MOST PRECIOUS ARTEFACTS HAVE BEEN STOLEN

THE ORGANIST AND THE CHURCHWARDEN HAVE GONE MISSING SIMULTANEOUSLY

SOMEONE HAS EATEN ALL OF THE BISCUITS

Dave Walker © 2016 CartoonChurch.com

Guest Columnist

A New Year - a new animal?



Rev. Carl Fraser, Rector of the Parish of Fall River, NS.

February 18, 2015 was the last day of the Year of the Horse in the Chinese Calendar. February 19, 2015 began the Year of the Goat. On February 7, 2016 ended the year of Goat and so began the Year of the Monkey. On January 27, 2017 the Year of the Monkey will end and January 28, 2017 begins the Year of Rooster. I am not an expert in the Chinese Zodiac nor a follower of the Chinese calendar; nor do I observe their New Year or even notice unless I end up at Chinese restaurant with one of the placemats on the table in front of me. (And then I figure out what animal was the year of my birth and I read the little horoscope – sssshh!)

I see this as an opportunity and gift – to be a different animal, a new animal each year. So what does this have to do with church land? It got me thinking about our churches and parishes, our Diocese – will we welcome this New Year as a chance to be a “different kind of animal”? As we step into 2017, will we make some resolutions and resolve to be better whatever animal we are, or will heartily embrace the chance to be a different animal?

I was reminded of this as I read “Transforming Stewardship” by C.K. Robertson, who begins by examining the current landscape of the church. He asserts, rightly as statistics and demographics bear out, that too many of churches have not tried, have not wanted or even seen the need to be a different animal. Yet as the world swiftly changes, we need to be new animals (St Paul would say a new creation) to take advantage

of this new day to be faithful stewards. Robertson describes the way many churches are still acting and thinking – “we need to attract people’s attention” and “we need more bums in the seats on Sunday morning” – and he likens this to a particular animal – any guesses? The COYOTE, as in Wile E Coyote – Super Genius! Too many churches and parishes, he argues, are stuck in the Year of the Coyote, stuck in what he calls ‘coyote thinking’.

He writes, “the coyote ... is always thinking of new ways to snare the seemingly naive but ultimately triumphant roadrunner. Hardly unintelligent, the coyote is, in fact, quite innovative and creative. The problem with coyote thinking is not a lack of ideas but the inability to review and change one’s fundamental principles. What amazing things might happen if the coyote decided to become a vegetarian or order some take out ... All the energy that the coyote

expends in his single-minded goal of catching the roadrunner could be redirected towards more creative pursuits, accomplishing great things that remain unimaginable – and thus unattainable as long as he remains stuck ...” wanting to catch the roadrunner.

Our leadership at all levels is intelligent, resourceful, committed and creative – but are stuck in ‘coyote thinking’? Are we still striving to save our church buildings or are

we driven to be the church in and for the world? Is our motivation the gospel imperative to share the good news and touch our communities with Jesus’ compassion or is it still baiting people to ‘get more butts in the pews on Sundays’? Are we a church-on-the-give or are we really a church on the take (wanting their money and new blood)? Are we truly focused on serving them or is it ‘self-serving’ in sheep clothing? The heart of transforming from coyote to a new animal is in the hard questions we ask ourselves, our honest answers we give and in our courage to change directions.

The reality is far from bleak, as the group from my parish who attended Vital Church Maritimes 2016 confessed with amazement, not just of our efforts but the efforts of many small and rural parishes, “there’s a lot of good news and great things happening all over the place.”

The question is – will 2017 continue to be the Year of the Coyote for our churches and parishes? I hope and pray not. There are so many resources that can help us as we seek to be transformed. Several I will hold before you:

MORE – Diocesan Mission School – learning what it means to think, look and act missionally. Session 1 is already making its way around the regions and Session 2 will be launching in 2017.

Rich Church, Poor Church (Cliff Christopher) – the difference between being a rich church and poor church is not what’s in the bank account, not the numbers in the seats on Sunday but what’s in your heart and head – your attitude, trust, and gospel obedience.

Jesus Shaped People – The Parish of Fall River and Oakfield began this 15 week Parish Revitalization Program in late 2016. Based on 5 Priorities drawn from Jesus life and ministry, Sunday morning worship is redesigned and using small home groups, a space is created to engage people more directly in the gospel call. The first priority is PEOPLE. Jesus’ priority was people - people on the edge and people in need. We’ve been challenged about our ‘people focus’ – asking ourselves honestly if we’re just serving our own and doing some outreach or do we actually have God’s heart for the community?

Perhaps 2017 could be the Year of the Roadrunner – not us just running the roads madly at breakneck speed, but our people more and more out on the roads journeying, befriending, engaging those at the edges and in need, less and less serving the church building. Maybe it could be the year of the mouse (able to get through even the smallest of cracks and holes) or the year of octopus (using church tentacles to connect and interconnect the community and people) or maybe the year of the Water Bear (if you don’t know about them, Google them) or the year of ????

Each church must discern what new animal is needed in their area. A plethora of resources exists to assist us our transforming, yet it all hinges on a real yearning to be a different animal. My hope for 2017 is that the Year of the Coyote ends, that we become roadrunners or roosters or whatever animal allows us to thrive in our local habitat. Please don’t miss this opportunity or waste this new year gift. My prayer is that 2017 begins not with resolutions but a commitment to revolution – changing our hearts and minds, our churches to incarnate God’s hopes and dreams.

My prayer is that 2017 begins not with resolutions but a commitment to revolution

Meet the newly ordained



Colin Nicolle



Susan Slater

Michelle Bull



Colin Nicolle was raised in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia but didn't attend an Anglican church until he was in university. While studying for his undergrad at the University of King's College, Colin became increasingly involved in the King's Chapel serving at the altar and eventually as Sacristan. Following his undergrad he studied for three years in the Classics Department at Dalhousie University as he discerned a call to Holy Orders. In 2013 he began full time MDiv studies at AST and graduated in May of 2016. During that time Colin served as a student at St. Peter's Cathedral, Charlottetown; St. Peter's, Eastern Passage; the Parish of All Saints' By the Sea, Canso; and St. Mark's, Halifax. Colin was ordained to the Diaconate on June 24th, 2016 and was appointed Deacon-Incumbent of the parish of St. Mary & St. John, Summerside/St. Eleanor's, PEI in September of 2016.

Susan Slater grew up between Atlantic Canada (NS, NF, NB) and Québec, and was delighted to return to Nova Scotia in 1990 to begin teaching at Atlantic School of Theology. She spent twenty-six good and formative years as a member of faculty at AST. She has been mixed up with the church, faith and theological formation for all her adult years, and has practiced a range of lay ministries before and since her return to Nova Scotia. Susan is deeply grateful for the formative hospitality of the parishes in which she was placed during her discernment and postulancy: the parishes of All Saints by the Sea, Canso, and St. John the Baptist, North Sydney. She lives in Guysborough, NS, with her husband, Leif, and is currently helping out in the Parish of Strait Chedabucto.

Michelle Bull has been involved in the church for many years. She has been a lay leader working especially with teens, and also teaching, creating ecumenical events, and planning and helping to lead worship. She has an especial interest in liturgical drama and music.

Michelle has completed an M.Div. degree at AST, including extra training in pastoral care, which she particularly loves. She has worked as a volunteer and a student in many parishes, and has been placed at St. Peter's, Eastern Passage, as a pastoral associate deacon until April.

Michelle is married to Rev. Charles Bull, rector of St. Margaret of Scotland parish, and they have three grown children. She enjoys outdoor activities, playing her djembe, singing, and being with friends and family.

No wonder they call this "Good News!"



Rev. Dr. John Roddam

January 6th is the Feast of the Epiphany. The Book of Common Prayer calls Epiphany "The Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles." Central to the Epiphany Celebration is the Magi's visit to the baby Jesus. These were "pagan" spiritual leaders who responded to a prophetic word and sign and travelled hundreds of miles to find Jesus the Messiah and worship Him.

The Christmas and Epiphany seasons commemorate God's mercy in reaching out to demonstrate His love to a lost and broken world. Not only is the love of God expressed through Jesus Christ, but each person must have a personal epiphany – a revelation/ encounter with the living Christ – just like the Magi!

Jesus is the hope of the world. One of the Church's central mandates is to present Him to those who have not met Him yet; to hold forth the person

of Jesus Christ, as the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

William Temple, the beloved pre-WW II Archbishop of Canterbury, stated, "The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members."

Temple's definition of sharing this Good News has been embraced widely in the Body of Christ – "To evangelize is so to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, that people shall come to put their trust in God through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church."

This all sounds lofty and grand... BUT are we doing this?

An honest assessment of this within mainline denominations (including Anglicans) would conclude this is NOT happening in our churches. As Churches have

declined, we have embraced a survival mindset, caring for our own needs. Again Temple states, "The Church that lives unto itself, dies by itself!"

How does this change? The process is simple. This has been followed by church, business, and other enterprises – look at where things are thriving and see what may be gleaned!

There are many places in the Anglican Family and beyond, where the Church is thriving. We can learn from others and modify the ministry models as needed to apply in our context.

This also means an adjustment in theological perspective. The Western Church has largely embraced a Gospel of Affirmation – I'm OK, you're OK! Let's not mess with other's belief systems.

The Biblical, historic Faith in contrast, might be

characterized as the Gospel of Transformation – people are rescued from darkness, sin, and despair to the Kingdom of light and love.

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1: 13-14)

So... to explore working models of ministry will cause us to make adjustments in many dimensions. However, the result will be a close walk with God and fruitfulness – seeing broken people healed, marriages restored, people living into their calling and destiny.

No wonder they call this "Good News!!!"

Jesus, tanto nomini nullum par elogium!

Jesus, for so great a name, no praise is adequate!

Feedback on John's articles is welcome - e-mail john_rodham@hotmail.com and copy to diocesanimes@gmail.com also!

Getting ready for 2017 in one word: JESUS

BY CATHY LEE CUNNINGHAM,
PART-TIME RECTOR OF THE
CHURCH OF THE GOOD
SHEPHERD, BEAVER BANK AND
FOUNDER, THE VOCAPEACE
INSTITUTE

Warm greetings to all
of you in the name
of our Messiah,
Jesus, at the dawn of 2017!

A US ELECTION, A BEAVER BANK PLAYGROUND AND A NEW GLOBAL REALITY

A few weeks ago, shortly after the US Presidential Election, I was visiting a parishioner who told me about a few children she heard singing and playing outdoors in Beaver Bank. The song was as follows: "Dump Trump. Trump's a bump. Dump Trump." The children were 8 years old.

I spent a great deal of my news-watching time this past fall (usually late at night!) following the dramatic (often unbelievable!) unfolding of the US Presidential Election campaign. As I watched, I thought about all my friends, consulting clients and former colleagues who live in the United States, a number of whom had reached out to talk to me (very seriously) about their intention to move to Canada in the event of a Trump win.

As the flames of racism, division and hatred were fanned, and the Ku Klux Klan finally made their formal endorsement of Trump, many Americans said they were having literal nightmares about what the future might hold for them and their children. Others were experiencing hate speech, intimidation and severe bullying because of their religion. This, in addition to their manifold concerns about the potential negative impact of a Trump administration on health care, education, climate change, freedom of the press, gun control, foreign policy, the global economy, human rights and women's rights.

You've seen the news - or you've at least heard about it, perhaps through 8 year-olds singing in the playground! It has touched us all. Young and old alike. All races. All religions. All walks of life. After Inauguration Day on January 20th, 2017 and the four years that follow, what



Rev. Cathy Lee
Cunningham

will the world look like?

We are already seeing the beginnings of the impact. In the face of this reality, what can we - as Canadian Christians - do to bring compassion through our ministries in this ever-changing, increasingly complex and conflicted world, especially where God has planted us to serve? First, we need a plan. A holy plan.

LET'S START WITH OUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION RITUAL

For us as Christians, the Holy Days of The Naming of Jesus (January 1st, New Year's Day) and Epiphany (January 6th) call us to carve out intentional time to contemplate what we are called to manifest for God through our everyday lives. Rather than feel helpless, overwhelmed and dis-empowered in the face of the many things beyond our control, Jesus reminds us to keep it simple, to work to transform what we can, where we can. So, why not begin with our New Year's resolutions?

Our most common resolutions might look something like this: get more sleep; lose weight; drink more water; cut back on coffee; quit smoking; exercise more; pray more; spend more quality time with my family; give more money to charity; volunteer more; save more money; have more fun. The key desire: transformation. Why? It leads to more happiness, health, love, peace, security and fulfillment. At least, in theory.

While these are all wonderful things to do, what power might our resolutions gain if we see them as "outward and visible signs of inward and invisible grace"? If we enter

in to our resolution-making time as a holy process of co-creating our future with God we'll experience less self-interest and more God-interest. We leave the process with heightened capacities to transform the seemingly insurmountable challenges of the New Year into opportunities to build a better world. After all, we do believe that "with God, nothing will be impossible", right?

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION- MAKING WITH JESUS

Every year, I set aside big chunks of time in my calendar during the month of December for this visioning process. I can tell you, it's pure joy, because it's my annual review time with God. I buy a journal, art supplies, markers and note cards. I pray over the supplies before I begin. I set a place for Jesus in front of me, with an icon. I light a candle. Healthy snacks and a pot of green tea are nearby for sustenance.

My process: Pray, read scripture, reflect, write, pray, envision, pray, repeat. I break out my Bibles (different translations) and open up the BBC World News website and my liturgical calendar. I Google to see what the top struggles of the peoples, creatures and habits of the world have been over the last year. I visit the United Nations website. I study the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to be met by 2030. You get the idea.

Then, the holy conversation unfolds. The holy fire descends, I ask and I listen. How did I do this year in working to build up your kingdom, Jesus? Where was I weak? Where was I strong? Are my eyes and heart open wide, to see the world and myself (even if it hurts!) as you do, Jesus? How can I do better? Where can I meet the needs of the world with the gifts you've given me? How can I work with the people around me to do even more for you?

After I've plugged everything into my calendar, there is one, final thing to do: choose my word for the coming year. It is the word I record on every page of my day planner. It is the word that grounds and focuses me in an instant when life gets hectic, or an enormous challenge comes my

We Christians know the
definitive name of God:
JESUS

Let us give this name
to the coming year. Let
us sign the Cross of this
Jesus on brow, mind and
heart. Let us say with
relief
"our help is in the name
of the Lord!" And then
stoutheartedly let us
cross the threshold of the
New Year. If his name
shines above it, even it's
darkest hour will be an
hour
of the year of the Lord
and of his salvation.

Karl Rahner,
German Jesuit Theologian, d. 1984

way. I repeat it when I need to summon courage or open my eyes to a painful truth and respond with grace. I hold in my mind when I need to be brave, or creative, or a healing presence for others.

This year, my word is not just a word, it is a name, His name: JESUS.

As you contemplate your own callings in God, I pray that you will hear His voice deep in your soul and be guided to the purpose God has for you

in 2017. In so doing, I pray that you will come ever closer to our Saviour Jesus, and His great, great love.

A NEW YEAR WORKBOOK FOR YOU!

Head to www.vocapeace.com, to download your own workbook following the process above, and to learn more about the School for Worldchanging (an online learning centre and global communion I'm finally ready to launch in the new year).

It's A New Day!

A positive ground

By REV. LISA G. VAUGHN

"You've got to accentuate the positive!" crooned Johnny Mercer & the Pied Pipers in their 1945 hit song.

A point to ponder in church leadership as we begin a new calendar year in an era of great change.

We choose to approach our ministry scenarios with one of two views - either the proverbial glass is half-empty or half-full. Some have a theology of scarcity ("We don't have...") and others have one of abundance ("God has generously given us..."). Our perspective, as lay and clergy leaders, whether positive or negative, can have a self-fulfilling destiny. How we view our present and future ministry can sentence us either to dead-end declines or set a course to determine a brighter, hope-filled tomorrow for our Anglican congregations.

In the Church of England's groundbreaking research report, "From Anecdote to Evidence" (2011-2013), the authors point out that one of the common factors of growing churches is having clergy and lay leaders who take on mission-minded service with positivity. These transformational leaders motivate others, develop an inspiring vision for ministry,



Rev. Lisa Vaughn
Diocesan Parish Vitality
Coordinator

and are willing to take risks to try innovative things.

It seems simple and obvious, but positivity in the church requires an intentionality on the part of the leadership, particularly around the words and behaviours we express. There must have been a struggle with this issue in the early Church because Paul addresses it clearly several times. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11a, the apostle writes, "Encourage one another and build each other up." And in his letter to the first Christians in Ephesus, he says, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may

benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).

Being positive, encouraging others and focusing on hope is essential to healthy and vital congregations. Tending to refer to ourselves as an "Easter People" our Anglican identity speaks of the anticipation of new life in Christ, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our fellow parishioners and people in the wider community are longing to hear words of hope and to know that somehow, some way, God will make a way!

So, for example, the most effective leaders are the ones who help others bring out the best in themselves. They believe that their people can discover healing, mature as disciples and take up their own successful ministries.

Kennon L. Callahan in his book, "Small, Strong Congregations" says, "One of the signs of leadership is the capacity to encourage and coach people to develop and grow. An encouraging spirit helps people have confidence in themselves, to trust themselves that they can grow and develop. Coaching helps people discover what they can do. Correcting tells people what they cannot do."

Positive reinforcement of each person's God-given abilities is more than just

an exercise for the individual. Callahan writes, "We encourage people to discover new possibilities for living whole, healthy lives. We do the same in encouraging people to develop new ways forward for sharing their competencies to advance the mission of the congregation."

Another way to motivate one another in the church is through expressing our gratitude. When we share how we appreciate someone and their particular gifts and offerings, it builds them up. I heard one pastor say that those of us in leadership should develop the habit of being "thanking machines." The minister from a large congregation in Alberta, suggested that lay leaders and clergy should always be looking for opportunities to acknowledge and thank people in ministry. It is a little thing - a compliment, a note, a Facebook message, a phone call - but it means a great deal.

Creating a culture of positivity and inspiration within a congregation happens when leaders foster an environment whereby we celebrate success too. Patricia Lotich, the founder of Smart Church Management, in her article, "10 Traits of Effective Church Leaders," says it is important to be able to name the good things happening. She writes, "Effective leaders are able to recognize success and help their team celebrate those achievements. This is a critical component of team function and development."

"Rewarding performance and showing appreciation by celebrating successes, helps to keep team members engaged," Lotich said. "Celebrating even small successes provides the motivation and fuel to go after the bigger targets - no success

"One of the signs of leadership is the capacity to encourage and coach people to develop and grow. An encouraging spirit helps people have confidence in themselves. Coaching helps people discover what they can do. Correcting tells people what they cannot do."

is too small to celebrate!"

In the next few weeks we hold our annual meetings and reflect on the year past and our future. How can we intentionally create a positive environment, where we give thanks for God's abundance in our churches? How might we acknowledge the gifts and potential in others, as well as celebrate the good things that God is doing in our midst? Who do you need to encourage or thank today?

Rev. Lisa G. Vaughn is the Diocesan Parish Vitality Coordinator. For articles, inspiration and insights on congregational vitality and mission see the Facebook page "Parish Vitality Coordinator - Diocese of NS & PEI."

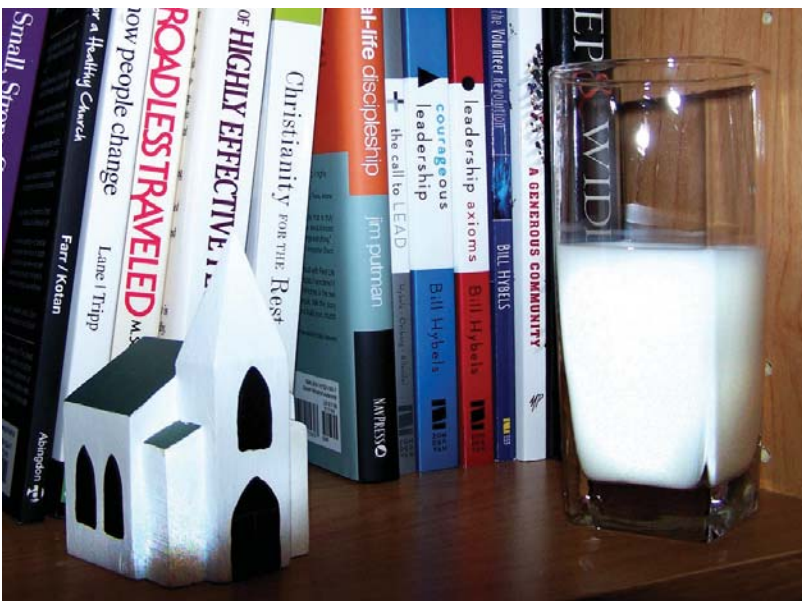


Photo: Is your glass half-empty or half-full?

Environmental responsibility

SUBMITTED BY SANDRA MARTIN

My family is unusual. Why? Because we try to do our best to lead environmentally responsible lives. We are not unique in this but, when I mention some of the things that we do to many in my extended family, friends, or co-workers, I am usually greeted with a blank stare. They don't get it at all.

We are just at the beginning of this journey; by no means do we have it all figured out. Being environmentally conscious means that we think very carefully about, and we often research, the choices that we make about our consumerism. For every product that we use, we stop and consider the impact it has on our environment. We ask ourselves questions: How long will this product last? Is it toxic to the environment? Do I really need this product? Is this product recyclable? Is the product

packaged in a minimal and environmentally responsible way? What is the environmental cost of this product? In doing research about a product, whom do I trust as a source information?

It is a complex process and we have found that there are no easy answers to most of our questions. Often, it is not at all clear as to which action is the best action. So, why even bother? I must admit that sometimes I wish that I could just go about life blissfully ignorant of my personal effect on the planet; it would make life easier, but not necessarily better.

Years ago, I remember the host of a well-known nature/science program stating that Christians were destructive to the planet by holding a view of superiority over other animals because of the biblical statement "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air,

over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" (Genesis 1:26, NIV). I do not feel that I am the Christian described by this host. My interpretation is that earth is a gift and humans have been given the task of caretaker, expected to take the utmost care of the planet and the other life on it.

As I said above, being environmentally conscious means that we ask questions. We don't have all the answers, but a few things that make sense to us. We avoid plastic bags whenever possible, because we see so many of them ending up along roadsides and in waterways. We avoid toxins like pesticides, chemical fertilizers and harsh cleaning products. We look for products that won't end up as landfill, either products that are going to last for many years or products that can be easily recycled. We look for products that are made from natural materials.

The environment isn't the only consideration because we are also conscious of the socio-cultural impact of our choices and cruelty to animals. We try to find products that are fair trade and products that are cruelty free (not tested on animals).

It is a balancing act. We have much to learn. But, it feels right to try to find a way of living that lessens our overall impact on the planet.

Life in the North is sometimes like that!



God is good and we need to be able to find the humour in almost everything because day to day life, especially in the north, definitely has its humorous side.

Interesting, the joke this morning was on me. When I got up, it was still very dark but there was a beautiful moon last night, I noticed that we had frost crystals (flakes), not frosted flakes, that had landed on everything and they were beautiful. So, after the sun finally came up, about 10 AM or a little later, I spent 20 minutes or longer getting dressed to go outside to shoot some pictures of the buildings and especially the vegetation now heavily dressed in a coat of white from the last couple of days. So off I go on my merry way, shooting a picture here and shooting a picture there and other than the fact that it was -22 I completely enjoying the experience. It truly does look like a winter wonderland, a very cold one. Well I probably took 30 shots, of them I probably will only keep 5 or 6 and discard the rest...for those of us who don't have a great eye, digital photography is the only way to go. While I was out I noticed that the septic truck came to the house and didn't seem to stay very long. I need to be honest, I didn't give that very much thought.

I went about my business; I had been working on a two-year plan for the parish of Old Crow and because we will be building a new church next to the site of the old church and making application to Heritage Canada to have the old church stabilized and designed a heritage site through First Nations, it all is fairly time consuming. I was about to leave that for a while and walk, my only mode of transportation, to the Co-op store to post a letter and pick up a few necessities when the plumber arrives

outside my door. Funny, seems everywhere else you must call a plumber, here they show up. After the usual pleasantries, he informed me that apparently, the septic truck was unable to empty the system, possibly frozen (I could make comments, but best to leave that to your imagination) and would need to be thawed, emptied and the septic heater would need to be turned up. I think it's comical, up here we unplug the deep freeze and plug in the septic. Such is life in the north.

My life here in the north has not been one problem after another, instead I would suggest that it has been one blessing followed by another. It just happens that my learning curve has been pretty steep, as well. I have had opportunity to officiate at a beautiful wedding, a large funeral, yesterday we had a baptism. I have a request for another wedding in the New Year, a number of house blessings and I expect to be working on confirmation classes beginning in January. I have been very well received and I am beginning to understand a little of the language.

When I first came, I was a little concerned that I might have problems fitting into a native community and what if they didn't want or like me, or worse, what if I didn't want to stay, being an isolated community it wasn't like I could get back into my little car and drive away. All of that was a senseless worry, God made a way for me and I found warm hearted, caring people who wanted a minister in their community. I am so blessed everyday just to be permitted to live and serve here.

Rev. H.A. (Bert) Chestnut
Old Crow, YT



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Michelle Bull appointed deacon of the Parish of Eastern Passage from Dec 1st, to Apr 30th, 2017.

Rev. Laura McCue appointed rector of the Parish of Digby-Weymouth effective Jan 16th, 2017.

Rev. Kyle Wagner appointed rector of the Parish of Christ Church Dartmouth effective, Mar 1st, 2017.

Very Rev. John Wright appointed rector, part-time, of the Parish of Blue Rocks effective Nov 6th, 2016.

Rev. Tory Byrne appointed priest-in-charge, ½ time, of the Parish of Annapolis effective Nov 16th, 2016.

Rev. Gordon Druggett appointed priest-in-charge of the Parish of New Ross effective Nov 1st, 2016.

Building Healthy Parishes' Big Three

Foundational building blocks are being laid for future parishes work within the Diocese

Three main themes and ten priorities emerged from a recent visioning retreat held by the Building Healthy Parishes Team (VSST). The discernment and discussion event was held August 29 to 31, at the Debert Hospitality Centre. Of the 32 lay and clergy leaders invited, 19 were able to attend and all regions were represented (except for PEI, regrettably due to a last-minute cancellation). In advance of the planning event, invitees received several articles for reading preparation and prayer.

Focused areas of interest are: Christian Formation, Building Disciples, and Leadership Models. These topics were chosen based on many conversations and questions raised among the Building Healthy Parishes Team, from several congregations, and even as a result of parish crises that had emerged over the previous year or more. The planning event was designed around these topics and the process used at the 2015 Synod: What is? What could be? What will be?

[A] Christian Formation refers to the very beginning stages of helping people explore the Christian faith and also how we can foster an (re-)awakening in belief and devotional behaviours. (This priority had been raised in table discussions during our Diocesan Synod in 2015.) Priorities named are:

1. Encourage small group discussions (weave into existing bodies; sharing our stories)
2. Get to know our community
3. Share [ideas and programs] between congregations

[B] Building Disciples is the intentional embracing and living-out of our baptismal vows fully and enthusiastically in daily life. This stage focuses on a maturity of discipleship, whereby people identify their calling and spiritual gifts, take ownership in their Christian service, and are empowered for ministry. Four priorities were determined:

1. Making (safe) space [for sharing stories and learning faith language]
2. Language for Faith (definitions)
3. Small Groups as a way of building relationships in parishes (going deeper)
4. Discernment (for various forms of lay ministry, not just ordination)

[C] Leadership involves the identification, raising-up, equipping and 'releasing' of the baptized to "create and sustain Christ-centered, mission-minded ministering communities of faith" (Diocesan vision). It relates to balanced and mutually-shared ministry between lay leaders and clergy. These priorities were identified:

1. Share resources/assets in



Region, Diocese

2. Explore leadership which is shared among all the baptized
3. Investigate ways to change our structure to better enable God's mission in the 21st Century

These blueprint priorities are somewhat out of context without the rest of the notes and background materials, however the BHP Team thought it was important to share them with the wider Diocese. A number of practical ideas were framed-up, and in the next months (and years), concrete initiatives will be produced. Two such projects are a PowerPoint presentation related to Christian

Formation, available for download and use in parishes (coming in early 2017), and "Faith Sharing Cards." Patterned on ordinary playing cards, these 52 flashcards with engaging questions, can be shared at church meetings and other parish-related gatherings. The aim is to encourage and energize conversation to help people articulate what they think and believe related to their faith. Each parish will receive their own copy of these Faith Sharing Cards at the 2017 Diocesan Synod meeting.

To access these question-cards immediately, you may print a set on card-stock weight paper. Just download the PDF from

the Diocesan website (www.nspeidiocese.ca). Click on the 'Leadership' drop-down bar and go to 'VSST & Task Groups' to 'Healthy Parishes', send them to your printer (black & white works fine), and cut them out. There is also a version you can print directly to business card specialty paper.

For more information, to get involved in this healthy parishes planning work or if you have questions, contact BHP Team Lead, Tanya Moxley (stewardship@nspeidiocese.ca), or Parish Vitality Coordinator, Rev. Lisa Vaughn (902-420-0717, lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca).

Honoring our heritage in the Parish of Liscomb/Port Bickerton

By REV. KRISTIN MACKENZIE

Rev. Joseph Alexander arrived as a missionary sent to provide an Anglican presence on the Eastern Shore in 1843. He was ordained deacon in 1852 at St. George's Round Church in Halifax and priested there in 1857 by the Right Reverend Hibbert Binney. Although Rev. Alexander was stationed to serve in Stewiacke in 1859, his attachment to the St. Mary's River remained, he and his wife retired to the region, they would live here for the rest of their lives.

It is now the privilege of our parish to care for the gravesite,

a legacy of our first rector, located at the site of the former St. Mary's River Anglican Church (1927-2012). After many years the original site began to deteriorate and so the parish council resolved to replace the headstone. The marble top of the monument was able to be salvaged and placed at the site. The stone reads:

"Rev. Joseph Alexander who entered his rest March 11, 1869 aged 68 years. He lived for Christ on earth below. He rests with Christ in Glory now."



MISSION (is) POSSIBLE:

Diocesan stories of people responding to God's call

"The ukulele phenomenon"



Photo: After a Parish of New Germany Outdoor service at Lake Mushamush, David Arenburg, visiting from Truro, who had brought his ukulele was delighted to be able to 'jam' with two members of the Ukes+ Group, Marion Veinotte (left) and Rev. Catherine Robar.

BY REV. LISA G. VAUGHN

It is hard to imagine that a small four-stringed musical instrument from Hawaii could have such an effect on congregational vitality!

There is something of a phenomenon happening in our diocese as several parishes are embracing the 'plinky' melodic sound of ukuleles in their faith communities.

Associate priest, Rev. Catherine Robar, said a small group from the Parish of New Germany started with a few lessons in early 2014. Today seven ukulele players, a guitarist and snare drummer have formed the group the "Ukes +". They lead music several times a year at special parish services, including an outdoor worship held last summer at Lake Mushamush. Whenever

the band plays Sunday attendance numbers swell.

Parish rector, Rev. Mellanie Cohoon is excited by the ukulele group. "It's tapping into something that exists in people's secular lives and now they are given permission to bring their instruments into the church," she said.

A new initiative of community kitchen parties, with 25 to 40 people, are hosted in homes. Parishioners invite their friends to join in the musical merry-making. Rev. Catherine says, "It's informal enough that anyone can sing along."

Future mission work with ukuleles in the New Germany area is being considered. "The possibilities (for ministry) are endless and we're open to the Holy Spirit," said

Rev. Catherine.

The Parishes of Aylesford-Berwick have a new ukulele group taking off, made up of 24 people age 16 to 84. The new rector, Rev. Mel Malton, was more than surprised by the response after she put the word out seeking interest in this music ministry. She laughed, "The first session 20 people came! It was insane!"

Teaching and rehearsal sessions are one hour every Thursday evening. Participants who have never picked up an instrument before are turning out. Rev. Mel says, "The ukulele is not hard to play and because it's so easy, it gets people together, and they can sing along at the same time."

The priest and instructor reassures the players that all abilities are welcome.

Rev. Mel tells them, "If you lose your place, just strum the C cord, smile and sing. Nobody will know, and they will think you are brilliant!"

Playing a musical instrument in a large band is a new experience for some of the ukulele parishioners. "They are looking around in a pleased wonderment, watching each other playing," said Rev. Mel. "There is such joy!"

The Valley group of four-string strummers has begun to take their ministry to long-term care facilities to minister to the residents.

Non-church attending people also take part in the ukulele fun as parishioners extend a warm invitation to join them in the music ministry. "The Holy Spirit is in the mix," said Rev. Mel. "You can feel it!"

Ukuleles are reasonably priced, starting at about \$20 for a plastic one. Some players rent their instruments from local music stores. Others are able to obtain one through a family member or a community contact, since they are relatively common and reasonably priced.

Both rectors affirm that parish unity is one of the benefits of the ukulele groups. Musicians from different churches gather as one band to learn, play and have fun. Rev. Mel said, "I think people are missing coming together. ... It's recreating a sense of community."

Teach us to Pray: Practicing the presence of God

As Anglicans, we have a long tradition of prayer. Our prayer book, from its 16th century beginnings, is modeled on the monastic offices and has provided a template for a regular round of daily prayers, scripture reading and the Sacraments. By this model we are encouraged to develop a dialogue, a partnership in which we are invited to “talk things over” with and to listen to God. It is within this partnership that we are called to live our lives with praise and thanksgiving, with intercession for those in need, with petition for ourselves. Yet, in the busy pace of our lives, we sometimes miss this interaction with God.

Many Christians have found the writings of a 17th century Carmelite lay monk, known as Brother Lawrence, helpful in their journey. He’s described in historical accounts as a simple, humble man. He served in the army during the Thirty Years War and when it was over, became a footman for a French noble family. In mid-life, he entered a Carmelite monastery, but found the rigorous disciplines of the Order frustrating to his desire to get closer to God. While working in the kitchen, he realized he could talk to “the God of pots and pans” or, as he phrased it in the title, he could “practice the presence of God”. In whatever he was doing, he said, he maintained a passionate regard for, or an attitude of attention to, the presence of God. “I turn my little omelet in the pan for the love of God,” he wrote. He fell



Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith
Diocesan Representative, the
Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

head-over-heels in love with God and let that admission transmute and transform everything he did. You know what happens when you are head-over-heels-in-love: you cannot get your Beloved out of your mind: the Beloved is a presence in everything at every moment.

To love God like that, writes Brother Lawrence, requires our getting to know God; paying full attention to the movement of God in our every-day life. If we can attune ourselves to “see” and to “listen”, we can make all of life a prayer. I believe it was the prophet Yogi Berra who said, “You can see a lot just by looking”. Here, seeing means more than just looking: it’s about perception, about pondering things in our heart, as Mary did, storing them up so that they can form and inform who we are. And where do we begin looking for this more intimate relationship with God? Everything has been made sacred in its origins

by God, and everything will be divinized. It is perhaps easier to recognize God’s presence in times of joy; the psalmist says that even in the desolate valleys, we will uncover life-giving springs and that wherever we find ourselves, high or low, God is revealed. We are rewarded for perseverance in our looking for God: “no good thing will the Lord withhold . . . happy are they who put their trust in God” (Psalm 84:11)

Our lives are fragmented; so many things to do, so many events to worry about, so many people to think of, so many experiences to work through. Often it seems that just keeping things together asks for enormous energy and more often than not, we

experience an energy crisis. Brother Lawrence’s advice to walk constantly in the presence of God is not just a nice suggestion from someone who lived in far simpler times, but rather is an important challenge to, even a radical prescription for, our present day muddle.

When we’re serious about prayer and no longer consider it one thing among many to “do” but rather, as the basic receptive attitude out of which all of life can receive new vitality, we will, sooner or later, need to raise the question, “What is my way to pray? What is the prayer of my heart?”

When our heart belongs to God, the world and all its

cares cannot take that from us. When God has become the very Love of our heart, our basic alienation is overcome and we can pray with the psalmist, “Happy are the people whose strength is in you! Whose hearts are set on the pilgrim’s way.” (Psalm 84:4)

REV. FRANCES DROLET-SMITH
DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE,
THE ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF
PRAYER

PHOTO: VICKI FIORATOS

Photo: He could talk to “the God of pots and pans.”

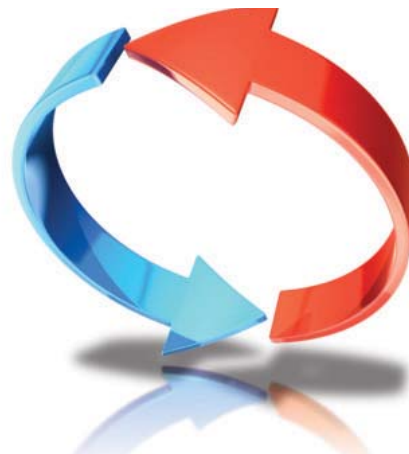


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January Clues

ACROSS:

- 1 – Feast marking Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles (8)
- 5 – Humped beasts of burden native to the Middle East (6)
- 9 – Near the South Pole (9)
- 11 – "Let her (Ruth) _____ even among the standing sheaves." gather what is left by the reapers (Ruth 2:15) (5)
- 12 – Fortune telling cards (6)
- 13 – Fill with delight (8)
- 15 – "They were all _____ in one place" in one gathering of people (Acts 2:1) (8)
- 16 – British actor, Sir _____ Guinness, played Obi-Wan Kenobi in "Star Wars" (4)
- 19 – Old Testament Jewish scribe and the book named after him (4)
- 20 – "How can you believe if I tell you about _____ things?" divine (John 3:12) (8)
- 23 – "You shall be for me a _____ kingdom." befitting clergy (Exod. 19:6) (8)
- 24 – "My house shall be a house of _____" petition to God (Luke 19:46) (6)
- 27 – Brightest star in the constellation Virgo (5)
- 28 – "Therefore my beloved, be _____." unwavering (1Cor 15:58) (9)
- 29 – Evades (6)
- 30 – Person who runs a machine (8)

DOWN:

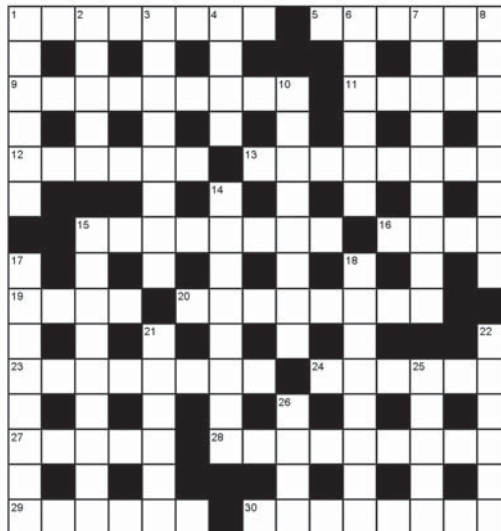
- 1 – "Righteousness _____ a nation." raises in honour (Prov. 14:34) (6)
- 2 – To bury in a tomb (5)
- 3 – "I have a goodly _____." inherited portion (Ps. 16:6) (8)
- 4 – Lacelike fabrics with uniform mesh, used to catch fish (4)
- 6 – Variety of long-haired cat (6)
- 7 – Forever (9)
- 8 – Punishment of court for crime (8)
- 10 – "And now you will _____ ... and bear a son." become pregnant (Luke 1:31) (8)
- 14 – Ornamental towers on churches (8)
- 15 – "When the disciples saw (Jesus) walking on the sea, they were _____." greatly afraid (Matt. 14:26) (9)
- 17 – Regarded with contempt (8)
- 18 – Unwanted person who pushes his way in (8)
- 21 – Piece of landed property (6)
- 22 – Author (6)
- 25 – Substance that causes bread to rise (5)
- 26 – Aid (4)

Bible Crossword

by Maureen Yeats



January Puzzle



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VIEW FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

The Pilgrim's Progress

BY REV. RAY CARTER

The Pilgrim's Progress is a book written by John Bunyan originally published in 1678. This is the story of the protagonist, "Christian", and his progress through life in search of salvation. Set against backdrops of towns and rural areas, the story tells of the pilgrim's trials and temptations on his journey to the Celestial City. The way is filled with monsters and spiritual terrors which confront Christian. He encounters such characters as Talkative, Ignorance, Giant Despair, Worldly Wisdom, and the demons of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and the evil town of Vanity Fair. But he is also joined by Hopeful and Faithful. It is a wonderful allegory for the Christian life.

Last fall I was extremely blessed to have the opportunity to embark on one of Christianity's "Big Three" Pilgrimages, the "Camino" (the other two being Jerusalem and Rome). The Camino of Santiago de Compostela, or The Way of St. James is an ancient pilgrimage to the Cathedral in Santiago where the bones of the Apostle James are said to rest. The pilgrimage really starts when you leave your home, but for many the jumping off point is Saint-Jean-Pied-De-Port in France, some 775 km from Santiago. This is an experience that has been commonly described

as "life changing" by nearly everyone who has attempted it. It involves about a little more than a month of time, a lot of personal effort, and the willingness to take the first step...and a lot of steps afterwards.

Like many pilgrimages, in my humble opinion, the Camino is less about the destination than it is about the journey. The external adventure is definitely worth the price of admission, but it is the internal adventure that makes the experience life changing. Pilgrims walk the Camino for many different reasons, but all find that the time spent in deep thought creates a clarity of insight that forever enhances the quality of life afterwards. To me it was like being on the most incredible retreat of my life.

Every day my partner Heather and I would rise, don boots and backpack, and set out to walk an average of 20km. Every day it seemed we hurt somewhere. As fellow Pilgrim Mike from Australia said, "The body is very democratic-it hurts in a different place every day". It seems we are challenged in our daily life by similar issues, both physical and spiritual.

Every day we would meet an array of people in various places, walking this pilgrimage for various reasons. A bond is formed immediately with strangers as cries of "Buen



Camino" (good path) are exchanged. This phrase means good luck and happy travelling to most, but it also carries another meaning to many, an acknowledgement that your fellow pilgrims are seeking something meaningful or spiritual in their life. A strong sense of being part of a dynamic community develops - a community whose members are changing continually, some dropping out, others joining. I began to associate this community with my faith community here in this diocese, not much different than our journey together in faith. We are challenged by issues both physical and spiritual, which we deal with

as best we can, always keeping in mind our destination. In Spain it was the tomb of St. James. In life it is Salvation through Jesus Christ. Whether it is a month long journey through Spain or simply daily meditation on scripture, we can all take time to ponder how we want to live life's journey. I wish you all a Buen Camino.

Photo above: At the start of the trip, the end seemed a long way away.

Photo lower left: The road sometimes stretched endlessly into the horizon.

Photo below: A communal dinner with fellow travelers on the Camino.

The external adventure is definitely worth the price of admission, but it is the internal adventure that makes the experience life changing.

