

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

St. Joseph's Parish Annual General meeting will be held on June 14 following the 11:30 a.m. Mass. There will be a simple barbecue lunch followed by the normal AGM format. In setting this time for the AGM, it is the hope of the Parish Pastoral Council that this will not just be a business meeting, but will also be a time to foster community building within our parish community.

So, no matter which Mass you attend, plan to gather in the parish hall around 12:45 on June 4, meet some new friends, renew old acquaintances, enjoy a simple meal and hear the parish reports.

We look forward to seeing all members of the parish at our AGM. Mark the date in your calendar and plan to attend.

## Have a Say on How the Parish is Run

### Volunteer on Parish Council

#### Elections this Spring

The St. Joseph's Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is an advisory body to the Pastor, whose purpose is to sustain St. Joseph's Parish within the Oblates' twin charism of welcoming all and solidarity with the poor, while working for a spiritual renewal of all members of the parish. The PPC is concerned with all aspects of parish, but does not, however, become involved in the day to day details.

Council membership is open to all Catholics in good standing registered as members of the Parish. The goal is to have members selected in such a way as to both reflect the entire population of the Parish, mirroring diversity in the parish, and to include representatives from groups not traditionally having a voice in PPC discussions.

Members are required to attend monthly Council meetings and any special meetings as appropriate, to read all background documentation

provided for the meetings, and be prepared to take part in all PPC discussions and decisions. Members are expected to participate actively in committee work, to build collegial working relationships with members of the parish community, and to engage with that portion of the parish community from they are drawn.

A nominating committee is being established to identify candidates for election as members of PPC. This election will be held in late June, after the Annual General Meeting, which is scheduled for the afternoon of June 4. Additional details will be provided over the next several weeks in Mass end announcements, Bulletin inserts, etc. For more information immediately, leave your name and contact details with the front desk of the Parish Office or at the Welcome Desk at the back of the Church at Mass. And of course any of the current members would be happy to discuss any of the details with you.

## SINGING AN EASTER ALLELUIA

During the season of Lent, the "Alleluia" is conspicuous by its absence. During the penitential season, we do not express our joy in such an exuberant manner—we are more subdued as we prepare our hearts to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection.

Beginning with the Easter Vigil, the Alleluias ring out once again. We know just from the sound of the word and the way it is sung that this is something special and unique.

The Hebrew root of the word means "praise to Yahweh (God)". It was used to give praise and thanks to God in times of rejoicing; an acknowledgement of God's wonderful good-

ness to us.

The expression was preserved, untranslated, by the early Christians as a superlative expression of thanksgiving, joy and triumph, especially in connection with the Lord's Resurrection. It was used in the ancient Greek liturgies and is found today in all Christian liturgies.

When we gather for the Easter Vigil, the Alleluia's ring out again after our days of fasting and preparation. We have gathered to celebrate Jesus' Resurrection



and our own rising with him to new life. We remember that in baptism we now share in Jesus' risen life, a life that we will share fully after death.

While we sing the Alleluia in a special way at Easter, we sing it throughout the year, since we celebrate the Resurrection each Sunday when we gather for liturgy and we live it each day.

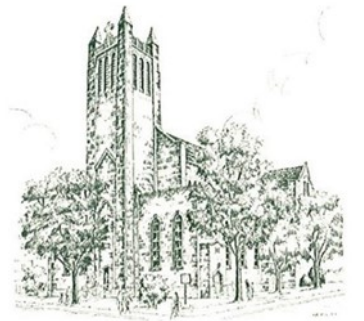
When you sing the Alleluia this Easter, stop and reflect on your reasons for thanksgiving and joy. As you reflect on the blessing for which you give thanks, ask how you can share those with others.

*A new heart I will give you, and a*

# NEW SPIRIT

*I will put within you. Ez. 36:26a*

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## ST. JOSEPH'S DIALOGUE CIRCLE ON RENEWED RELATIONS

Developing a Heart for Reconciliation and Healing

SUNDAY, APRIL 30—10:30 A.M.

### CELEBRATION OF EASTER AND ST. KATERI TEKAKWITHA

All are invited to gather for this celebration with members of Kateri Native Ministry of Ottawa as part of our ongoing Dialogue Circle. We will celebrate Eucharist together, blending our traditions and rites, and continue our fellowship after with a reception. Come, participate in this joyful gathering.

### BEING IN SOLIDARITY

You may have noticed that we start each celebration by acknowledging "that we gather on unceded Algonquin territory". Some have questioned why we start our liturgy with a political statement. The acknowledgement is not a political statement, but rather one of solidarity with our Algonquin sisters and brothers who are in dialogue with government over the traditional territories which were never ceded to the crown through treaty. In this statement, we are adding our prayer that the negotiations will result in fair and equitable solutions to the question of land rights and compensation.

## CHRIST IS RISEN!

This traditional Easter greeting sums up what we celebrate as we gather, not just today, but every Sunday as well.

As we celebrate Christ's Resurrection, we ought also to celebrate our community, sharing in the risen life of Christ. We celebrate

in gratitude all those members of the community who minister so diligently to ensure that we have life-giving celebrations: Music Ministers, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Welcoming Ministers, Collectors, Ushers, Celebrant's Assistants, Environment Ministers and

many others who help organize our celebrations and ensure that all is in readiness when we arrive.

For all of them and for all who gather to celebrate, we give thanks, and to all, we pray that the celebrations of Easter will be life-giving and joyful.



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## PALM SUNDAY—REFLECTIONS ON THE SIGNS

By: Roshene Lawson

*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*

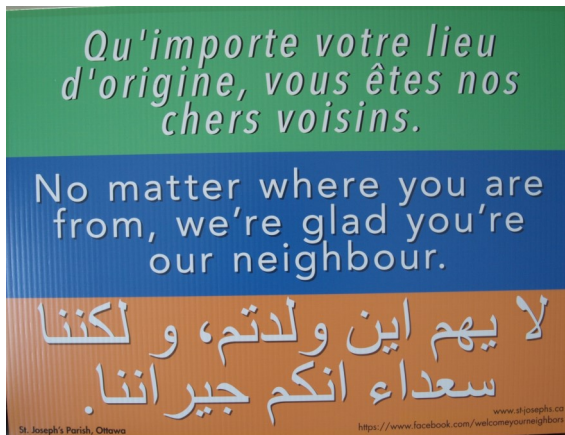
Jesus is greeted “triumphantly” in Jerusalem just days before he is put to death. The people of Jerusalem welcome Christ in the way people in antiquity would welcome someone for whom they had great respect. They laid palms in front of him, some would have thrown clothes to him – remember that scarcity was a real issue in those times, so these were great offerings towards someone who might, to others, be seen as a stranger. But Jesus enters Jerusalem quietly on a donkey – not a horse, a more humble animal – reflecting Christ’s humility as God’s servant, and is greeted as a king would be. Only a week later (or thereabouts) Christ is betrayed, people have turned on him, other religious leaders and politicians hate him for what he preaches because it’s different from the “rules” and norms of the time and he is put to death - and not just any death – a death that marks him, that shames him and that is a slow and suffering death. He goes from being welcomed like a king to hanging from a cross because of the fear and hatred of others towards him.

The parallels of what happened on Palm Sunday vs the reality and suffering of Good Friday got me to thinking – especially this week. Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord – are they really?

Is anyone else here as distressed as I am at seeing the images from the chemical attacks on Syrians this past week? Do you think the people in Syria who were maimed or killed in those attacks this week felt blessed? I doubt it. Do they feel welcomed and celebrated in their own country? I doubt it. And that’s just THEIR country. What about those who have left and try to begin life anew in other countries?

Palm Sunday and what’s happening to those being persecuted around the world got me to thinking how did we get here? How do we not seem to have changed in terms of how we’ve treated each other for millennia???? What are we not getting???? And for the record, I’m not about to have all the answers to those questions but I think I have a beginning....

It occurs to me that people hating each other starts with an internal sense of superiority over the other. Someone has to be like me, believe what I believe, look like I look or act in a way that makes complete sense to me or they are “different”...and for many people, different is bad and makes you a lesser person in their eyes. So what do we do when we feel superior to another? We judge. We criticize. We lecture. We ostracize. We ignore. We created feelings of loneliness, feelings of being rejected and feelings of anger and frustration. And where does that lead? It leads people to continue the spiral of hatred



Sounds grim right? But it’s really not. We have a way of fixing this, of turning things around – of living what Christ was talking about – we can show acceptance, love, and caring for our fellow neighbours. We can work on judging less – and maybe even not at all! We can lecture others less and listen more to their viewpoints and feelings. We can welcome them in and give them community and friendship despite

“differences” or things we may not yet understand. We can ask for forgiveness where we’ve caused hurts. THIS is what Christ asked people to do – he was carving out a new way for us to treat each other and many loved him for that because it meant that they were equal to each other and loved equally by God too!

We as Christians, come here once a week and worship together. We hear the gospels each week in order to remember what Christ asks of us. And then many people (myself included) leave the building and sometimes forget to walk-the-walk of everything we just heard and shared.

So, in the spirit of Christ being rejoiced and welcomed into Jerusalem and as a continued symbol of that welcome and as a remembrance of Christ’s suffering and having to carry the cross the following week, we have an opportunity being offered to us as parishioners.

We have purchased 100 signs that say “No matter where you are from, we are glad you’re our neighbor” (maybe have the picture up on the overhead). It’s in three languages, French, English and Arabic – it doesn’t matter which language comes first or what colour it is or if you don’t exactly love your current neighbour. It’s for people to put on their front lawns – maybe some of you noticed them on the church lawn as you came in today. It’s a visible, tangible way of

telling people in the communities in which we LIVE what we celebrate on Sunday and what we choose to live throughout the week – even if it makes us uncomfortable sometimes. Listen, I live in the Glebe – I got some sideways looks when I put the sign up this week and you know what? It made me uncomfortable at first – because I don’t like to be judged or made fun of.

And then I checked myself and realized, “wow, you’re a hospital chaplain, a life-long member of St. Joe’s and someone’s sideways look about your openness to others makes you uncomfortable? Get over yourself!” So, that sign sits on my front lawn and will stay there. I intend to try harder to walk the walk, not just talk the talk and these signs are a start and a reminder of that. Maybe they will generate conversations with others about acceptance and welcome and love. Maybe someone who is feeling un-welcomed will see that and say, “Wow, that’s different. Maybe there are places I can feel welcomed.” Maybe someone who hasn’t been feeling welcomed might feel a bit braver about a hello knowing that I am extending a hand of welcome and friendship to all.

One thing I do know is that we **have** to start somewhere because the goings on in our world of this past week and the many other incidences of hatred and violence can’t stand as they are. We have to demand of others, but firstly of ourselves, to do better as a society. This is one way to start that.

When I was at Trinity College in Toronto we used to have a closing blessing at the end of our weekly service that went like this “Our celebration has ended, our service is now begun. Let us go in love and peace to serve one another.”

So, as we take up our palms today, and as we enter Holy Week, remembering Christ’s suffering and ultimate sacrifice, let’s put up these lawn signs as a symbol of honouring that sacrifice and going in peace to love and serve one another – no matter where we’re from or what our differences may be.

Palm Sunday and Holy Week are the reminders that Christ was a living, breathing testimony to how we need to treat one another in order to live God’s love, to wipe away hatred and live as a resurrection people.



## Self-Emptying—Good Friday

Jesus teaches the art of *metanoia*, or “going into the larger mind.” Underlying all his teaching is a clarion call to a radical shift in consciousness: away from the alienation and polarization of the egoic operating system and into the unified field of divine abundance that can be perceived only through the heart.

But how does one make this shift in consciousness? It’s one thing to admire it from a distance, but quite another to create it within oneself. This is where spiritual praxis comes into play. “Praxis” means the path, the actual practice you follow to bring about the result that you’re yearning for. I think it’s fair to say that all of the great spiritual paths lead toward the same center—the larger, nondual mind as the seat of personal consciousness—but they get there by different routes.

While Jesus is typical of the wisdom tradition in his vision of what a whole and unified human being looks like, the route he lays out for getting there is very different from anything that had ever been seen on the planet up to that point. It is still radical in our own time and definitely the “road less traveled” among the various schools of human transformation. Many of the difficulties we run into trying to make our Christianity work stem from the fact that we haven’t realized how different Jesus’ approach really is. By trying to contain this new wine in old wineskins, we inadvertently missed its own distinct flavor. In Jesus everything hangs together around a single center of gravity, and we need to know what this center is before we can sense the subtle and cohesive power of his path.

What name might we give to this center? The apostle Paul suggests the word *kenosis*. In Greek the verb *kenosein* means “to let go,” or “to empty oneself,” and this is the word Paul chooses to describe “the mind of Christ.”

Here is what Paul has to say (Philippians 2:6-8):

Though his state was that of God, yet he did not deem equality with God something he should cling to. Rather, he emptied himself, and assuming the state of a slave, he was born in human likeness. He, being known as one of us, humbled himself, obedient unto death, even death on the cross.

In this beautiful hymn, Paul recognizes that Jesus had only one “operational mode.” Everything he did, he did by self-emptying. He emptied himself and descended into human form. And he emptied himself still further, “even unto death on the cross.” In every life circumstance, Jesus always responded with the same motion of self-emptying—or to put it another way, *descent*: taking the lower place, not the higher.

Cynthia Bourgeault, Centre for Action and Contemplation