



THE MONTRÉAL LAY READER

LE PRÉDICATEUR MONTRÉLAIS

The newsletter for lay readers of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal
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SPRING RETREAT AT MANOIR D'YOUVILLE

Ile St. Bernard, Chateauguay

Friday, April 17 to Sunday, April 19, 2020

Leader and Speaker - The Right Reverend Michael Oulton,
Bishop of Ontario



Bishop Oulton is a former lawyer who practiced in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

In his past he also served as a member of Municipal Council in his hometown of Port Elgin, New Brunswick and was the youngest citizen at age 18 to hold elected public office.

Bishop Oulton served as a priest in Nova Scotia and PEI before he transferred in Ontario in 1997 and served in Collins Bay and in Belleville. He was installed as Bishop of Ontario in 2011.

Bishop Oulton has a passion for the churches' engagement with the world in mission, quoting theologian Thomas Buechner who wrote that our vocation as disciples of Jesus Christ is found where "your greatest passion meets the world's greatest need".

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy

Bishop Michael describes the life and ministry of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as very appropriate for our day and age. The bishop writes, "We live in a world today where the political and cultural dialogue is becoming increasingly heated, divisive and toxic. The church must be prepared to engage in public in a manner that is both 'salt for the earth' and 'leaven to inspire'." The firm foundation of the Great Commandment of Christ is to love God, and to love self in equal measure.

Bishop Oulton's talks will be based on the book by Eric Metaxasis entitled, "Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy". Each session will be accompanied by a video. The four sessions are entitled:

1. What is the Church?
2. Living in Christian Community
3. Religionless Christianity
4. Come and Die





GOD'S GRACE

THE REV. LORNE EASON

My wife and I were visiting with her brother and his wife not too long ago, and during our visit my brother-in-law asked us if we were familiar with the song "Chasing Cars" written by Gary Lightbody, lead singer of a group called Snow Patrol. We said that we were not and asked why.

My brother-in-law said that while he was listening to the song recently a particular verse caught his attention, which he hadn't noticed before.

The short verse says this, "I need your grace to help me find my own." Those words in this love song awaken in him the realization that he needed to let his wife's grace help him find his own. And that made me wonder.

I wondered how often I have lost sight of the grace that God has shown me. I questioned whether any of His grace in my life has helped anyone else find or look for God's grace for them. I asked myself how often do my words, my attitudes, my actions, give evidence of a life touched by Grace?

That visit made me realize that I need to be more mindful in praying that God would enable me to be a witness to His Grace so that others may perhaps find it for themselves?

I was also reminded though, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9, that "My (God's) grace is sufficient for you (me), for my power is made perfect in weakness."

May we as leaders in our parishes and as individuals generally, be counted here and now as one included in the "great cloud of witnesses," as the author of Hebrews 12:1 states, encouraging others in the faith and being a guiding light to those outside of it, trusting that God's grace is sufficient for each of us to be His witnesses.

Yours in Christ,

Lorne +





A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

ANNE CLAUDE GEOFFRION

Living To Make A Difference

Dear Friends,

On my computer desk, I have a printed note that says "How will I live today to make a difference?"

This inspirational message came to me when I was involved with Habitat for Humanity and the HFH Région des Deux-Montagnes affiliate. Mark Rodgers, the CEO of Habitat Canada at the time, would send all the affiliates across Canada a weekly motivational email. One of his emails not only caught my attention, but is still very much part of my life motto today. Mark called it: Living to Make a Difference!

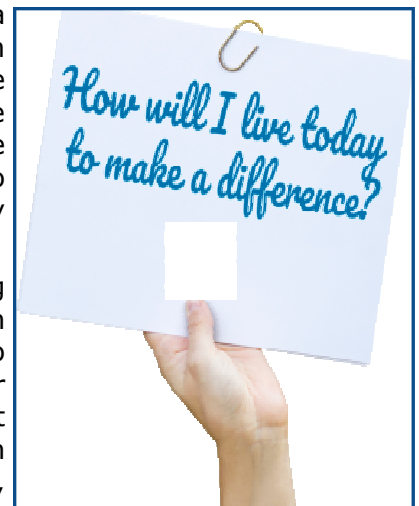
He said that we have a choice. We can choose to go through life living unconsciously, not really thinking about what our life is about, but the fact remains that our life is our own responsibility. It is a gift... and we only get one! So, we need to make sure we make the most of this incredible, time-bound opportunity.

In history, past and present, we have many examples of inspiring stories which often challenge us to live a life that makes a difference. I am sure each and every one of you has also been instrumental in making a difference in people's lives around you. What I am suggesting is to make this practice a daily conscious effort.

Of course, God can make the biggest difference of all in our lives, if only we will allow him. We could say that God is in the "life-that-makes-a-difference" business. Jesus lived a life that has made the most profound difference any life could make! Had he not shown us this unconditional love we would have no hope for eternal life.

This is what I am suggesting you to do. Write a note to yourself and stick it on the bathroom mirror, or the refrigerator, or even the morning coffee maker. It needs to be somewhere you will see it at first glance in the morning. I printed "How will I live today to make a difference?" and have it on my computer.

For the next 30 days commit to asking yourself that question every morning as soon as you get out of bed. And then go out and do it. Trust me, it will radically alter your perspective on life. It will make you think about your relationships, the way you interact with other people, the way you spend your time, even the way you spend your money.



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This helps us become focused and intentional. It helps us to shed the petty concerns that often consume our attention and emotions and will help us get our priorities right. Asking yourself that one question at the beginning of every day has the power to reshape your life! I also suggest that at the end of each day you jot down your efforts and successes.

Living this way is not about preaching to others or trying to control them. It is asking God for help each day in being an example in all we do or say. We are all called to be shining lights in a very dark world. Matthew chapter 5 verse 16 says "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and they will praise your Father in heaven."

Jesus Christ was a walking sermon to all in His presence. That is our challenge now as we follow in His footsteps.

So, let's start living to make a difference and become walking sermons for Christ.

Blessings to all of you,

Anne Claude

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND!

Sue Winn and Alison Bentley were both travelling home from New Zealand at the end of November, and found each other in Auckland airport.

Such a happy moment!



LAY READERS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**** A NEW FORMAT THIS YEAR ****

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2020

8:30 AM UNTIL 2:30 PM

THERE WILL BE NO CHARGE FOR THIS SPECIAL EVENT!

**Church of St. John the Baptist
233 ave Ste. Claire
Pointe Claire**

Your executive is planning to combine a workshop with Archdeacon Michelle Eason, a beautiful meal prepared by Lay Reader, Juliet Komboni, and a short business meeting to enable all Lay Readers to attend this important annual event.

This is your opportunity to offer suggestions for future speakers and special topics to enhance our annual roster of teaching workshops. Your input will be so valuable. You will be interested to hear about our financial situation, providing information about bursaries and support for the work we all do.

Be sure to mark your calendars now, so that you do not miss this AGM, a very special day of fellowship and learning!

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|-------|--|
| 8:30 | Registration and refreshments |
| 9:00 | Morning Prayer |
| 9:30 | The Ven. Michelle Eason speaking about " Levels of Faith/Spiritual Maturity " |
| 10:45 | Break |
| 11:00 | Workshop continues |
| 12:15 | A delicious lunch! |
| 1:15 | Gather for business meeting |
| 2:15 | Dismissal and Closing Prayers |

We are looking forward to your presence on May 23rd!

A STUDY DAY WITH THE REV. DR. JASON CRAWFORD

IAN SINCLAIR

Topic: Human Suffering

The subject was “human suffering”, and more than forty Lay Readers sat in rapt attention as The Reverend Dr. Jason Crawford presented his views on this most profound subject. The venue was the conference room at St. John the Baptist, and the event was the annual Study Day in November, 2019.

The focus was both on suffering and the challenges for people who would care for those suffering. Drawing on the Greek tragedy “Philoctetes”, he opined that for someone suffering “the whole world becomes you and your pain”. Philoctetes withdrew into his suffering, and had been left alone on an island for ten years because no one could help him or stand to be with him. He had lost all sight of the greater good, and his would-be carers had left him to his own devices.

Suffering is part of our human condition, and so is the attempt to find meaning in the suffering.

Enter the care-giver. It’s not merely the “right person” doing the “right thing”, but (according to the “ethics of care” by Joan Tronto and other writers), care is fundamentally a person-to-person relationship involving four essential elements on the part of the carer:

1. Attentiveness – being aware of a need. (Did you notice the homeless person?)
2. Willingness – to respond and take care of a need
3. Competence – know yourself. What are you good at, not good at? Do you know who to call?
4. Responsiveness – tactfully respecting their position as they understand it.

The carer – willing, able and competent – enters into a relationship with the one to be cared for, who ideally receives care and acknowledges the efforts of the carer. It is an interdependent relationship, one that can start and end, but which (for a competent carer) does not descend into co-dependency.

The relationship can be set on the first visit. The carer says, “I am here to be with you this day”, to which the cared-for might reply, “I’m not dying, am I?” At least this first encounter will help the cared-for understand what you are there for, and set the roles and boundaries.

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A moral responsibility to care presents itself:

1. Caring relationships – in an expanding circle, we are to relate to family, close friends, work colleagues, out to strangers and even future generations to whom we leave this world;
2. Mutuality – you'll share knowledge and feelings, fears and secrets that must not be disclosed
3. Transformation – when you see caring, it inspires you to care more;
4. Action – do something to alleviate the situation, change structures, offer thoughts and prayers;
5. Caring as normative – the mother-child relationship provides a norm against which caring is measured – respectful, trusting, open and mutually beneficial.

Intercessory Prayers

The action response, "thoughts and prayers", raised some discussion. The phrase brings to mind the only words that a politician can speak following a tragic event. A person suffering hunger needs a meal, not a lecture on Marxist economies. But the Lay Readers agreed that prayer can be action indeed. It involves being mindful of the situation, visualizing the person in a better condition, giving thanks to God for who they are, and praying for those unable to pray for themselves.

One Lay Reader spoke of the power of intercessory prayer over his healing, as he lay in hospital. Even the medical staff noticed – "all the stuff that goes away in prayer, or finds its proper place". Calm reigns in the place of fear, pain loses its centrality.

We spoke of prayer as an act of worship. One Lay Reader's sister is getting dementia. She occasionally "swaps out" and does not talk. But she went to the front of the room and sang an entire hymn on her own. It was a moment of transparency, of hope, of encouragement to continue praying for someone possibly unaware of the support.

Someone suggested that intercession is a sacrifice – of what? Worry, time, ego, control – all given to God. Becoming vulnerable, open, humbling ourselves is offering what is most valuable to God – again, an act of worship.

Hymns are often prayers that are sung, as all of us together declaring that we should "ponder anew what the almighty can do, if with His love He befriend thee". What songs do people need to hear? "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so" – it is a powerful song that the child needs to hear.

What song is Jesus singing to us? In a hospital, a song can inspire, bring back a memory of services long ago – people of different politics, lives and ideas singing together!

Many of us share Psalm 23 and the "valley of the shadow of death", where "I will fear no evil; Thy rod and thy staff, they strengthen me". Many an aged person can say such psalms by memory, and find inspiration when the valley of death seems nearby.

The God-question

"Where is God in this?" we ask, or the cared-for person asks. "What is the theodicy of this suffering? What is the point?"

We have to acknowledge the life-changing impact of suffering. It can happen at any age. One day you were taking care of yourself, now others take care of you.

Suffering is a universal experience. It involves a network of connectedness – none of us are alone.

So the carer may ask the God-question, but what is the real question? It could mean, "I can't take caring for my suffering Mother anymore!" The carer must really listen to hear that question.

A patient was screaming "No!" until the caring visitor sat down with her. The patient went quiet – all she needed was a presence.

When the final question comes, "ceasing to exist" is met by "hope in the love of God". Then it is good have Bible verses well memorized: "God is love, and those who abide in love, abide in God". "Perfect love casts out fear".

The Question of Death

Fear of the unknown, of change, or non-existence accompanies these life and death questions. Most of our lives, we control what we'll do, when and how it will occur. We are autonomous, self-governing beings. But at death, it appears that we'll be unable to gain control again – bound, like John 21:18.

Hearing the voices of loving family members, talking with them or just listening – this experience of love can ease the transition. There comes a moment of acceptance, comfort, permission. From the dying woman, a gift to her husband – the words, "Don't worry".

Someone else's father was dying and afraid. "Daddy", she said, "You don't have to be afraid". And he relaxed and died. Fear is lonely, but love is unselfish.

This day of learning and fellowship left us all with much to think about. Our sharing in small groups helped us to know each other in new ways. All in attendance were grateful for the wisdom and guidance of our teacher, Jason Crawford. He wandered among us as he spoke, eliciting our responses and deepening our understanding as we reflected on our own experiences of caring and being cared for.



NEXT STEP OF THE LAY READER ADVENTURE...

SIMON HARTOPP

"Roy" in our family was admitted to hospital with breathing difficulties. Within a week, he had breathed his last. Roy was not known to any active local cleric, so the family asked me if I could "do" the funeral and burial. The desire was for a timely "goodbye" - the event was booked at Urgel Bourgie for the following Saturday. That gave me seven days to get everything organised.

Roy had died in Pointe-Claire, so I told Reverend Lorne Eason about the invitation, both as our Pastor and as the local Anglican priest. With a bright green light "go for it" from Lorne+ I set to work.

I had led various aspects of life transition events before, but this one was a first in several ways.

1. An outdoor burial in the middle of winter;
2. Service and burial at a funeral services place;
3. I was leading the whole package - liturgy, eulogy, homily, music, committal as well as the pre-funeral discussions with family members.
4. The funeral service (but the not committal / burial) was going to be webcast live.
5. And all to be planned within the week!

One of the Lay Reader Association workshops in 2019 covered topics related to funerals. I dived into my notes and quickly realised that the workshop given by Rev. Giuseppe Gagliano, had been very worthwhile. I was feeling empowered. Having the checklist to complete added a touch of formality and due process to the conversations with family members. This was important at a time of stress and distress for them. Little things like - "a copy of the Funeral Director's death document please", and "was Roy baptised?" were initially met with a sense of hostility. But the hostility turned to positive vibes as I explained the reasons for my requests.

Lay Reader Clovan Boyce and Lay Pastoral Visitor Darlene Scott both had had connections with Roy. They accepted invitations to lead bible reading and prayers. This was a huge help to me - it meant I could sit at the organ during their leadings and mentally switch from being Officiant to being Musician.

Taking time to talk through details with the Funeral Director (Daniel) paid off handsomely. He was very thoughtful - he told me afterwards that he regarded his work as a vocation. Sand was in place at the burial spot (we had also brought some compost, so folk had choice of 'dust' to cast); the green light would come on when the webcast was 'live'; we agreed cues for coffin entry and exit from the chapel; should the (Roman Catholic) crucifix be at the chancel of the chapel?

St. John the Baptist Church kindly loaned 40 BCPs for the occasion. That reduced the amount of printing needed to just two sides on one piece of paper - hymn lyrics on the front, the text of the Committal on the back. We left the prayer books indoors so that they would not be damaged by any precipitation. For the future, I am looking into establishing a mobile kit of books - both BCP and BAS - that could be used at funeral events. Then I would not have to raid the pew copies, and race to get them back into place for Sunday morning !

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When the day dawned it was -15C. We wondered how many would come. Counting the *definites* we amounted to eight; some *possibles* sent in apologies. Hmm...Would there be 10? or 12? In the end, to our surprise and delight, some 24 participated.

Because of the anticipated cold weather, I switched the Order of Service a little. Some of the prayers usually said at the graveside were moved indoors.

Conversations and story-telling at the reception and afterwards indicated that the event had been "just right". And by the time I reached home, someone had sent in very positive feedback to the webcast.

As a result of this event, I developed the Workshop checklist a little, and also created an Order of Service. If you would like copies of these spreadsheets, please contact me.

If you are asked to lead a funeral or similar life transition event, I'd recommend to say "Yes". As it was for me, it will likely be a step of faith for you, but the people, simply by asking you, have already indicated their faith in you. It is a ministry that we Lay Readers can offer. The ministry may be especially appreciated when a family is more comfortable dealing with someone with whom they have a connection.

May God continue to bless us, and those whom we seek to serve in Jesus' name.

IN MEMORIAM



Our Lay Reader Association is mourning the recent deaths of four of our long-time, active members. We send our condolences to all family members and friends. They will be very sadly missed at our special events where their participation has always been so valued and enjoyed.

Gracious God, you remind us that you have made everything beautiful for its own time, and that your purpose is that all should stand in awe of you. We have been blessed by the beautiful life and spirit of Livingston, Doreen, Judith and Maureen in their time with us. Their lives gave testimony to your divine nature, eternal power and steadfast love. May we in our time here on earth follow their good example and so like them stand in awe of you and bring glory to your name.

Amen

The following tribute was sent to us by Cynthia Page, who is the warden at Grace Anglican Church in Sutton and who worked side by side with Doreen for many years.

In Memoriam - We remember the life of Doreen Field Page, who passed away December 29th 2019. Her journey was reflected through her faith, dedication to the Christian way and service to the ecumenical community of Sutton. She was a faithful member of Grace Church Sutton for over 40 years, Rector's Warden, vestry clerk, ACW member and secretary as well as Eucharist server and preacher when needed. She was an Education for Ministry graduate and a dedicated lay reader for many years.

She loved life, her family and especially her husband Hollis. She was a former teacher and a member of the Weavers guild of West Brome where she made beautiful creations with wool. We celebrated her life on January 8th, with a beautiful service that included songs, spiritual prayers, readings and shared memories.🙏 Her family has planned her funeral for May 16th at Grace Church 🏠 Everyone is welcome. In our pain and sorrow we remember her spirit and love of God and all his children. May she rest in peace 🙏❤️

On a personal note I would like to add that Doreen was one of the most welcoming, giving and accepting people that I have ever had the good fortune to meet. Always ready to give a hug and a kind word, she has graced many a lay reader with beautiful hand crafted crosses that she personally made and generously gave to all...

And this was the essence of Doreen, to learn, to teach, to share, to laugh, to love and live life following the path of Christ.

A beautiful soul who will be sadly missed.

Randy Gates



LAY READERS' WORKSHOP - SEPTEMBER 28, 2019



LAY READERS RETREAT - APRIL 26-28, 2019



An Invitation

You are invited to a
service of Evensong on
Sunday, March 22nd
at 3:00 pm.

Church of St. John
the Baptist
233 Ste-Claire Avenue
Pointe Claire

Archbishop
Linda Nicholls, the
Primate of the Anglican
Church of Canada, will be
present to award the
Anglican Award of Merit
to Susan Winn

Please come to meet our
Primate, and to support
Sue at this time.

A reception will follow
the service from
4:00 to 5:00 pm



THE LAY READERS' ASSOCIATION

OFFERS BURSARIES

Every active Lay Reader who participates in courses of ongoing religious studies is entitled to \$100 or \$150 per year to assist with the cost of their study.

Please send a request to our treasurer, Ann Cumyn,
acumyn@sympatico.ca

2020 LAY READER STUDY DAY AND COMMISSIONING SERVICE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2020
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

4:00PM EVENING PRAYER AND COMMISSIONING

FOLLOWED BY THE BISHOP'S RECEPTION FOR ALL
FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Church of St. John the Baptist
233 ave Ste. Claire
Pointe Claire

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Jesse Zink
Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College



The Rev. Dr. Jesse Zink has been principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College since August 2017. He oversees the life of the college, represents the college to its partners and the broader church, and teaches courses on mission and Anglicanism. Baptized in Canada and confirmed and ordained in the United States, he has worked in the Anglican Church of South Africa and the Church of England before his arrival in Montreal. Prior to ordination, he spent time variously as a DJ, a news reporter, and an ambulance driver.

We look forward to hearing from this exceptional teacher, and hearing from his vast experience of living with faith.

A BOOK EXCHANGE!

At the retreat in April, Lay Readers are invited to bring books that support our ministry, preaching, teaching, and books of prayers to give to or exchange with other Lay Readers. Study bibles and commentaries are always helpful. Christian novels would be welcome. A table will be provided for this exchange.





