

Our Sacred Stories

Trying to Figure It Out: Our Life-long Quest for God Among Us

In 2007, Sister Elizabeth A. Johnson published a wonderful book entitled *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*. Its title might in some ways be intimidating. But its aim and what Sr. Johnson presents is really quite timely and very readable. It speaks to everyone's shared need to figure out who we are and how we relate to all that is around us.

Many years ago, I dropped in on a soccer game in which one of my nephews was playing. After trying to spot Andrew, I finally found him with some of his team mates. They were off the field, crouched on the opposite sidelines examining an anthill. These 6 year-olds were intrigued by what they had discovered. At every stage in our lives, from the smallest child to the wise elderly, we find ourselves trying to "figure it out". We are "seekers" by nature.

For the person of faith, whether we are firm or struggling in that faith – and let's be honest, we are all a little bit of both, our search to find God among us is part of our life journey. The Gospels are replete with stories of such seekers, trying to "figure it out".

As Luke describes Jesus beginning his mission, he tells the story of Jesus going to his hometown of Nazareth and entering the synagogue (Luke 4:21-30). The people listen as he reads from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (Is. 61:1-2). As he speaks about the passage, they find what he says difficult and get upset. Jesus especially challenges them with his comment that what Isaiah proclaimed is in fact now being fulfilled. Finding God among them is a challenge. As much as they honoured the prophets like Isaiah, they often struggled with what the prophets proclaimed. They could not handle seeing God so closely among them. It is no easy task to recognize how God relates to us and how we relate to God.

In our current world the great tendency is to see God at the peak of a triangle, the authority, the judge, the all-powerful one who is far from our humanity and our circumstances. This is a concept of God that developed in the 17th & 18th century and gave what is termed "modern theism". Such a God is above us and beyond us in the created universe. This is a God who is far from us. Our quest is to find the God who is close and relatable and lives among us.

This relatable God lies at the core of our Christian faith. The writer of the first letter of John captures this: *Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God... So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.* (1 John 4:7, 16)

In our Catholic tradition we often begin our communal and our personal prayer with a blessing: *In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.* This is not just an empty expression or a meaningless rote ritual. In fact, it is an expression of our relationship with our God who is love. Out of love God gave and gives us life. Out of love God reached out and came among us in the person of Jesus the Christ. And out of love God continues to be among us in the power of the Spirit.

This is the Good News that Jesus preached in his mission. It is the mission that he has passed on to every disciple and it is the center of our scriptures, our creeds and our life of prayer and action. Paul, writing to the Christian community in Corinth expresses the aim of our quest, who we really are, around the world: *Now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love* (1 Cor.13:13).

How am I doing with my quest for the living God in my life?

John Jennings



St. Gertrude

Sts. Simon & Jude

Mission Churches

St. John the Baptist Parish

105 Union St. † Woodstock, NB † E7M 2W4

(506) 328-3306 † E-Mail: sjbnb@rogers.com † Website: www.stjohnthebaptistnb.com

Facebook page : <http://www.facebook.com/st.g.church.1>

Pastor: Fr. Martin Arputham

Mass Times: St. Gertrude

Saturday 4:00 pm

Office Manager:

Sunday 11:00 am

Pastoral Council Chair: Sylvie Dempsey

Reconciliation Saturday 3:00-3:50 pm

Property & Finance Chair: Marg McCallum

St. Simon & Jude Sunday 9:00 am

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 10am-12pm

Reconciliation Sunday 8:15-8:45 am

"Masses may change if the level 3 of Mandatory Order extended. We will update through our facebook page and email "

January 30, 2022

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday	Jan	29	4:00 pm	St. Gertrude	"live-streamed"	Gloria's Aunt Anne
Sunday	Jan	30	9:00 am	Sts. Simon & Jude.....		No mass
Sunday	Jan	30	11:00 am	St. Gertrude.....		No mass
Monday	Jan	31				No mass
Tuesday	Feb	1	9:00 am	St. Simon & Jude	Theo & Germaine Francoeur	
Tuesday	Feb	1	12:15 pm	St. Gertrude.....		Rosary
Wednesday	Feb	2	9:00 am	St. GertrudeAdoration10:00.....	Buenaventura Pamplona	
Thursday	Feb	3	12:15 pm	St. Gertrude.....	Ethel Bridgeo & DMF	
Friday	Feb	4	9:00 am	St. Gertrude.....		Guy Beaulieu
Saturday	Feb	5	4:00 pm	St. Gertrude.....		Gloria's Aunt Elizabeth
Sunday	Feb	6	9:00 am	St. Simon & Jude		Parishioners
Sunday	Feb	6	11:00 am	St. Gertrude.....		Lloyd Markey

Please have announcement for bulletin into office by Wednesday

Please pray for the sick: Nora Gagnon, Pat & Ed McGuire, Margaret Bridgeo, Andy McLean, Anne Marie Voutour, Cindy Ouellette, Sarah Ann Wright, Carolyn Allain, Loraine Stone, Janice Ryan and Margaret Wilson

For those who have died: Dorothy Hemsley, Leo Campbell, Donald Keoughan & Monique DeMerchant

CWL- PRAYER LINE: Prayers will be said daily for two weeks by the CWL women, on request. All requests are confidential; no information is required. To have prayers said, call Jocelyn Keirstead (328-9485)

jkeirstead21@gmail.com

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS:

50/50 – Jan 24, 2022 Winner David Lenehan **\$402.00** Tickets are \$2/week available at Martin’s Corner Store on Broadway or Smart Stop Ultramar in Grafton. Tickets must be purchased by 6 pm Sunday.

COVID LEVEL 3

Fr. Martin will host a virtual only mass this Saturday Jan.29nd at 4:00 pm. It can be viewed on our Facebook page (St John Baptist Parish). The video will remain on our Facebook page for you to view at any time. Eucharist will be available, in the parking lot, from 4:45-5:15pm following the mass on Saturday. Please remain in your vehicle.

Offertory Envelopes: During this time of lock down, Offertory Envelopes can be collected on Saturday, following the Virtual Mass, for anyone coming to the church for communion. OR, they may be dropped off at the Parish Office in the mail slot. You may also send via mail to: 105 Union St., Woodstock, N.B. E7M 2W4 or e-transfer via telephone banking at your financial institution to sjbnb@rogers.com.

* FEBRUARY - MONTH of the PASSION OF OUR LORD

* FEBRUARY FEAST DAYS:

February 1 - Saint Brigid of Ireland (patron of Ireland, midwives, newborn babies)

February 2 - Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple

February 3 - Saint Blaise (patron of throat illnesses, animals, wool combers and wool trade)

February 5 - Saint Agatha (patron of breast cancer)

February 11- Our Lady of Lourdes

February 14- Saint Valentine (patron of love, young people, happy marriages)

Offertory Jan 22/23, 2002

	<u>St. Gertrude</u>	<u>Sts. Simon & Jude</u>	<u>St. Thomas</u>
Envelopes	265		
E-Transfer	20		
PAD	<u>1,417</u>	<u>222</u>	<u>77</u>
	1702	222	77
Lynn Lake	200	St. Bonaventure	30
D & P	5		30

FREE VIRTUAL TOURS OF VATICAN MUSEUMS

Have you ever wanted to see Vatican City but can't make it to Italy for a visit, especially now due to the world-wide pandemic? Now you can explore the many Vatican Museums from the comfort of your own home. A number of museums are offering FREE VIRTUAL TOURS, including one where you can see the Sistine Chapel (the Pope's own chapel and location for papal ceremonies like the selection of new Popes). The 360-degree views of masterpieces by Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci are breathtaking. These tours include areas that are usually off limits to the public. To access the virtual tours, go to www.museivaticani.va click on "collections", "museums" and finally, '360 degrees' and then use the navigational arrows. Where virtual tours are not available, museums are offering videos.

Founded in the early 16th century, the 26 Vatican Museums within Vatican City display works of art that have been amassed by the Catholic Church over centuries. The museums contain roughly 70,000 works of art, of which 20,000 are on display. In 2020, even though numbers dropped off by 80% because of the global pandemic, it still ranked 4th among the most visited art museums in the world. The Sistine Chapel was built between 1477 and 1480 and Michelangelo's "The Last Judgment", was painted between 1508 and 1512. The frescoes of the Sistine Chapel are considered to be the cornerstone of Renaissance art.

Also, under the Vatican's news website (www.vaticannews.va), you can access the latest news on the Pope, the Vatican, the Church and the world. This past Sunday (January 9, 2022), 16 babies received the sacrament of Baptism in the Sistine Chapel on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The entire Mass is still accessible on this website.



Our first Synodal consultation session with a group of 8 parishioners was a process of listening to and collecting stories, experiences and thoughts about where the church must go in the future to fulfill its mission of caring for God's people. The experience shared was prayerful, rewarding and purposeful.

Following that session at the request of the committee, Bishop Riesbeck agreed to extend the deadline for submission to Feb. 28, 2022. This provides us with a reasonable timeframe to gather information and submit a report.

PLEASE accept this invitation!

St. John the Baptist Parish Synodal committee is extending an invitation to all parishioners to 'journey together'.

Feb. 13, 2022 1pm Consultation session(s)

- Sessions will be held at St. Gertrude's and St Simon & St Jude church.
- In small group sessions facilitated by a committee member, parishioners will have an opportunity to share their stories, opinions and thoughts on the church past, present and future.
- Your voices will be welcomed and heard.
- Please RSVP by **Feb. 4** to the parish office or a committee member (contact info below)
- Covid precautions (masks, proof of vaccination, social distancing) will be required.

St. John XXIII speaking at Vatican II urged the participants to open the windows of the church. We always associate this with letting in fresh air, but something else happens when you open a window. You can hear what people outside and around you are saying.

Blessings on our synodal journey!
Looking forward to hearing from you.

Hugh Williams
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