



Descent into Auckland, New Zealand

Seminary Newsletter

of the Christian Community Seminary in North America

Dear Friends of the Seminary,

We once thought that the Spirit of God was leading our seminary through a great transformation with the move from Spring Valley, New York to Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We had no idea what all the Spirit had in store. There were transformations that we in the leadership of the seminary felt called to begin to facilitate, but much bigger forces immediately began to step into this process since March of 2020.

At the writing of this letter, Patrick is just returned from nearly three weeks of travel to Auckland, New Zealand and Mittagong, Australia, and Jonah is about to participate in a conference in Melbourne, Australia. These were the culminating events of a whole year of traveling to communities and regions where we welcomed to bring something of the heart of the seminary, and to meet the hearts of brothers and sisters in Christ in the wider English-speaking world. It was also a year where we had *no* onsite students and yet served

some 26 distance learning students and another 45 people who audited the courses. This included students from as far away as Beijing, China, the Philippines, Slovenia and South Africa. It also allowed us to travel to places in North America where we had not yet had a chance to bring the heart of the training to expression. What has moved us all along is the clear experience for all present: the spirit has been at work in our midst. One of the clear ways we know this is that our hearts feel *larger*, widened beyond their own narrowness, opened to each other and to the Divine.

A pastoral educator and poet once wrote, “How wide the world? / No wider than the heart is wide.” This word began to become poignantly true early on in our travels, when we made our trip to Scotland and Ireland in April of 2023. Somehow, the mystery of who we truly are, our true heart, is spread out over the whole earth. It is not just in the people and cultures that you find there. It is in the unique sky that billows in the dynamic cloud-creations over the Eastern Scottish coastline. It is in the impossible greens of the Irish grasses in springtime. It is in the ever-blossoming variety of the Wattle trees in Australia and the penetrating wetness of the cold season in New Zealand. And it shines in the faces and eyes of the souls on the path of becoming human in these regions, moving through the mystery of what our precious planet has to offer: the cross and the One who’s heart is wide enough to transform it.

We come back from this trip with this very clear experience: we are no longer the same people we were. We have been widened. It will ever remain our hope and prayer that those who come to the seminary in North America, those who participate in its programs from afar, those whom we meet when we come to visit also will be blessed by such a widening. Christ’s heart is world-size. This training would create a place where we welcome him into the heart that it begin to widen into those widths.

This coming year we will have ten students on-site engaged in the full training, around 5 students engaged in internships and practical training along with our distance learning program. In July of 2024 we look forward to ordinations again. We hope that this newsletter can be a window into the life of our past year and serve as an invitation to participate in what we are doing in the coming one.

In gratitude for your faithful support,

Patrick Kennedy *Jonah Evans*

Patrick and Jonah

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SECTION I: DISTANCE LEARNING AT THE SEMINARY IN 2022-23

**The Mysteries of Jesus Christ, The
Universal Human Being: *Tracing the story
of His cosmic journey- and ours- from Genesis
to Revelation in the light of Anthroposophy***
(Rev. Jonah Evans, Thursday mornings, 10:30 am ET)

In this course, we explored what it means to be truly human by deepening our understanding of Jesus Christ. We traced the story and evolution of this original human by focusing on the cosmic human being who became Jesus, went through death and resurrection and now lives ‘as the lord of the heavenly forces upon earth’. The true hope of this work is to refine and reshape the picture of God that we hold in our hearts. For there is perhaps no better medicine for our souls than how we imagine who God is, what He is doing, and what this means for our lives.

This course covered:

- ◆ The Divine Incarnation of The Son of Man and The Son of God
- ◆ The Five Sacrifices of Jesus Christ
- ◆ The Three Kingdoms of God
- ◆ The Kingdom of God on Earth through the parables
- ◆ The practice of prayer and how to live in communion with Jesus Christ in our time
- ◆ The Mystery of The Cross- the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- ◆ The Resurrection Body and The Spiritualization of Creation
- ◆ ‘The Lord of Karma’ and The Holy Spirit
- ◆ The Divine Sophia and Babylon
- ◆ The Two Beasts and Worshiping the Lamb
- ◆ The Holy Grail and the Cup of Wrath

Reflections on “The Mysteries of Jesus Christ”

by Joanna Bergmann, “Presentation Only” Student

Jonah introduced us to the Being who would traverse the path with us from «alpha to omega», and hoped that by the end of the school year we would have a new relationship with Christ-Jesus as our brother.

My greatest overall impression from spending these weeks with Jonah was his genuine enthusiasm for the material that he shared with us each week. Early on, he told us about Rudolf Steiner's encounter with the etheric Christ (and also Paul's encounter with Him). Steiner experienced his "I" in Christ. This is known as his 'Festival of Knowledge' in English. Jonah took us on a journey through many sources, showing us Christ-Jesus as a community, a church, a seed in every human being. He led us to an understanding of the 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man'. At the baptism, the Christ Being united with the pure Nathan Soul Jesus.

We can study (especially the Gospels and Steiner's books and lectures on Esoteric Christianity), pray, and experience the Sacraments in order to, in small ways, follow Christ's example. We can become more and more in His likeness, which is also the likeness of the Father. Jonah showed us that through the words of "The Consecration of the Human Being" we are invited to unite with Christ-Jesus as our 'helping guide'.

Passionate, organized, knowledgeable are words that spring to my mind to exemplify Jonah's sharing his deep interest and love for the Christ Mysteries with us; I am truly grateful.



The Despairing Man by Ida Liedl

«When the despairing man had uttered these words, the being who had spoken to him in his dream stood again before him, between him and Jesus of Nazareth. The being concealed the form of Jesus of Nazareth. And when the dream picture had again changed, had dissolved as it were in mist, Jesus had also passed on.» - from R. Steiner's The Fifth Gospel

“Who do you say that I am?”

by Cecilia Velasquez, Full Time Student

I was blessed to be part of the full-time DLP Jesus Mysteries Studies with the loving and patient guidance of Jonah Evans and in the company of an amazing group of people. Together, we embarked on a journey into the depths of our souls, seeking to grasp the meaning of the mystery of the union of Jesus and Christ, the deed of Golgotha, and its meaning for all humanity.

Little by little, we explored the mystical aspects of Christianity, the pre-earthly sacrificial deeds of Christ and Jesus, the preparation of Jesus for the incarnation of Christ, and we read from different ancient sources about the image of the Son of Man before the incarnation of Jesus and Christ. Then, reading the Gospels, we tried to learn more about the Son of Man through his teachings and his own words. Finally, we were asked to prepare a 20-minute presentation answering Jesus Christ's question to the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" What a journey!

This is my second year participating in the distance learning programs as a full-time student. I am still amazed by the depth and strong sense of community we could build through Zoom. Even though it is not an ideal medium, it is possible to connect with one another in a profound way when the participants put their whole being into the task. In every heart grew a deep-seated desire to meet in person.

I want to highlight the artistic approach to homework. We were asked to express in a drawing our understanding of what we read, from the ancient descriptions of the Son of Man to what Jesus Christ himself said about the Son of Man and about His being. I could really feel how my mind and my heart needed to relate deeply to the theme before I could even try to make any drawings. It was a challenge; most of the time, days would pass without me being able to draw anything, but inspiration always came, even if it was at the last minute the night before homework was due. We shared these drawings with the whole group and discovered the many images an idea could take when expressed by different humans' hearts and minds. So amazing!

After attending the course, I have renewed my faith in Jesus Christ as the Being of Love. I am looking forward to deepening my understanding of Him, the reality of His deeds, and His New Creation for the whole humanity. I want us all to be able to participate in the New Creation, to say yes to the calling and walk with Him into the future.

The "Son of Man" and the "Son of God"

by Melanie Nason, Full Time Student,

The Son of Man is Jesus "the human being" who was born in the flesh. He is the archetype of what God intends for us to become; full of grace and truth, courage, humility and sacrifice for the love of the other. He loves the Father and freely acts according to the Father's will. The Father knows His Son and loves Him. He is not a slave or a servant of the Father, but He is the Son who will receive His heavenly inheritance. A slave or servant does not inherit and is not free unless he enters into "Sonship" and forms a loving relationship to the Father. The Son of Man is in the image and likeness of His Father. When we see Him, we see the Father; His works are the Father's works. Their connection is one of deep Love for each other and for the human family... us! -- so much so, that He sacrificed His Life for the Life of the world, for humanity, and for the earth. The Son of Man went through the crucifixion at Golgotha and resurrected into new Life through the power of Love and Sacrifice... He is the meaning of the Earth!

At the Baptism, Jesus opened Himself to the Spirit of Christ and willingly received it, becoming a vessel for this Divine Cosmic Being who had come from the Sun and the community of the Elohim. Christ is a community! Jesus and Christ united and became one. The divinity (Christ) in Jesus is the part of Him that is “The Son of God”. Together, they become Christ Jesus. A God has never before experienced death, but He did, through Golgotha.

Christ Jesus has united with the Earth and has died into the soul of every human being as a seed and a power. And when we bring our awareness to Him or have thoughts of Golgotha, when we do sacrificial deeds of Love, moral deeds, He resurrects in us. He creates and replicates His Being in us, forwarding the movement of the community of Christians. We cannot go to the Father through Christ only, as we would burn; we cannot endure the sun intensity of the Christ Being. But we can go to the Father through Christ Jesus, the human part that has become the God-Man, the I AM (the youngest sheath of the human being) whose image and likeness we are to become! Christ Jesus is the “New Adam” and our progenitor. He has overcome death and has supplanted the “Old Adam” of the fallen world. Those who unite with Him, they will know the glory of His love and peace, His everlasting Life, for they are the children, they are the “Sons of God” who will inherit the Earth. All of creation is waiting for them... waiting for us!

Anointed for Creation - Bible Studies I

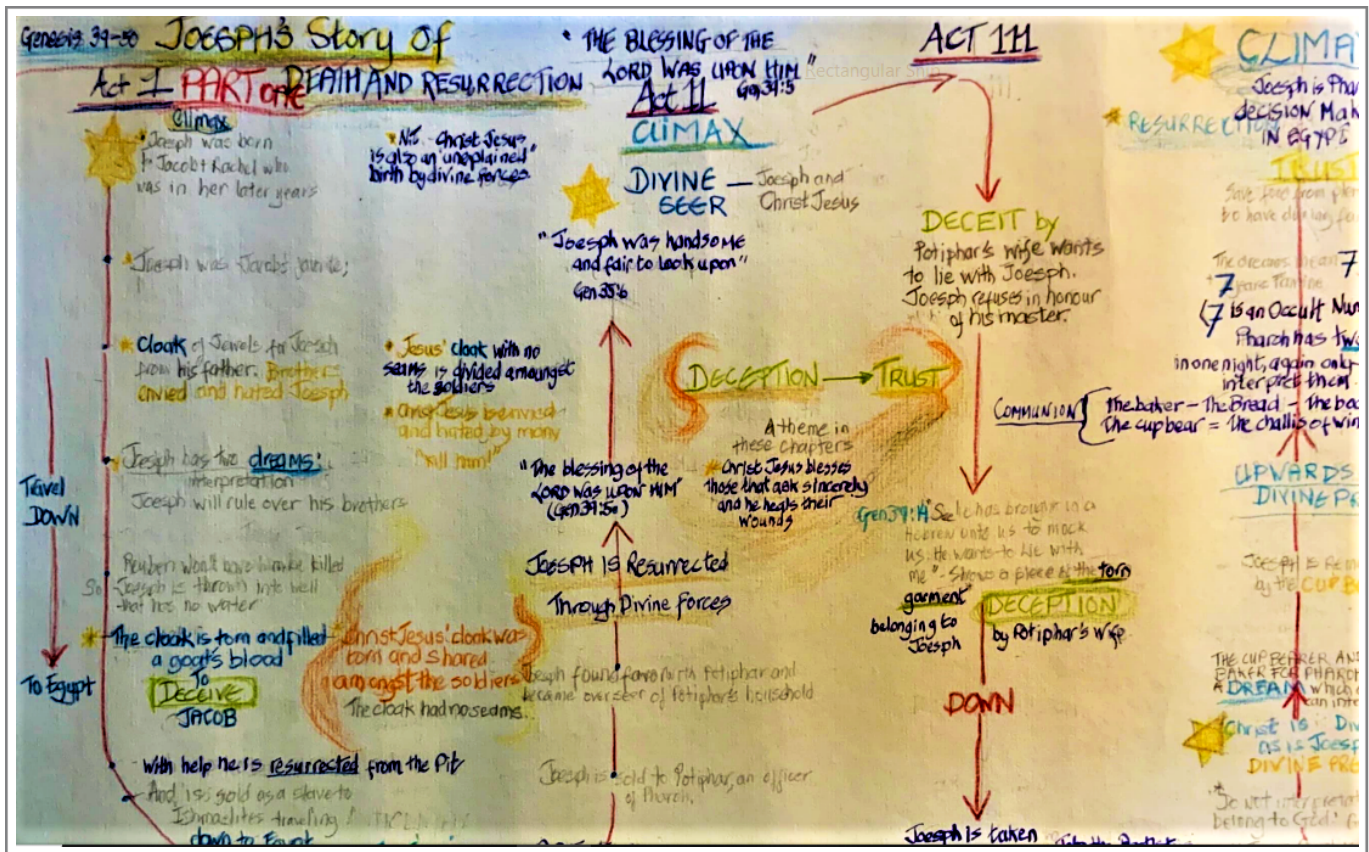
“He Creates in All that We Create”

(Rev. Patrick Kennedy, Tuesday nights, 7:30 pm ET)

In the movement for religious renewal, Christ Jesus’ role as Creator is lifted and emphasized in profound new ways. Seven times in the course of the renewed worship service we are invited to pray for him to “create in us”. In the recurring “Trinity” liturgy throughout the year we hear that he, indeed, “creates in all that we create”. The liturgy calls us to find him - and ourselves - anew in our time in the mystery of creative activity. In this course we worked to gain an orientation to the whole bible that reveals our true calling as human beings: our journey from creature to creator.

In this course, the participants:

- ◆ Learned about the Archangel Michael in Ancient Israel and his work now.
- ◆ Read deeply and carefully the first four chapters of Genesis as a key to unlocking the rest of Scripture.
- ◆ Contemplated the mystery of the Trees in the Bible.
- ◆ Discovered the four Anointings of the Old Testament as a key to unlocking the mystery of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Read elements of the Gospel of John in the Light of Genesis.
- ◆ Discovered our calling to become creators through Christ in the letters of Paul.
- ◆ Meditated on the New Jerusalem as the Cosmic “Immanuel”.



Detail of a narrative map of Joseph's story from Genesis by Nicola Schindler

Bible Studies with Rev Patrick Kennedy: A Reflection by Claudia Pfiffner, "Presentation Only" Student

The Bible is the most sold book of all times. However, with today's scientifically minded way of thinking in the Western world it is not always easy to understand. Or as Rudolf Steiner put it: "Dry intellect cannot grasp certain truth but gradually attuned perceptive sensibilities and feelings can." (Lecture VII, CW 109)

Patrick helped us to discover and develop keys for reading the Bible that helped me unlock its beauty and richness like never before. We learned to go slow and to look at the content as meditation literature. If we did not understand a sentence, we paused. We contemplated its meaning in light of the whole by looking at other passages from the Old and New Testaments. We did searches on Hebrew and Greek words to unlock their deep meanings (www.stepbible.org or www.biblehub.com). We looked at stories in light of their composition and artistic rhythm (hint: the middle is very important), and finally, we asked what the drama and feelings of the story are — so as to foster a closer connection through our feeling life.

The Bible can be understood on different levels. On a historic level it informs us for example about the political situation of the Romans and Jews at the time. On a personal, soul level many readers can probably identify with the apostle Thomas; doubtful until proof is seen (John 20:25). Then there is the level of our humanity and its evolution, which Rudolf Steiner wrote much about, as well as the cosmic spiritual aspect, which is still a mystery to most of us.

I experienced the Bible foremost as a book of transformation - transformation of the world and of self. Whereas the divine spoke to people through natural elements like clouds and fire in the beginning of the Old Testament, God came to live among His people in the innermost of the temple and spoke through anointed human beings like kings, priests, and prophets later on.

Finally, there is talk of a new beginning in the first chapter of John in the New Testament. We learn that the divine now speaks through Jesus Christ who has come not to judge the world but to save it (John 12:47).

When God created the human being, it was all very good. However, life quickly turned bad when humans were not able to resist the temptation of evil. Similarly, when a child is born, the world looks pretty good. The growing child starts to explore the world and soon finds itself tempted to not follow the rules. Will human beings be able to transform themselves with the help of Jesus Christ who was able to resist the temptations (Matthew 4:1) and bear fruits, true fruits of human life; like joy, selfless love and peace?

*You, who drifted,
who called the expanse into substance, against which
you could show yourself.
You saw what was to be and let us have it.
We caught our breath in the shape of your name.
Fed by your fruits, we formed what you made.
We beheld the rhythm of the herds upon earth and the
harmony of wind through your leaves.
I sang with you, ordering the earth and filling it.
Birds carried my voice to the heavens - amongst the sun
and stars, whose movement showed us time.
I recognize you because every face is yours.
- Sean Waters from a study on Genesis 1*

Biblical Studies: Significance for heart, mind and life

by Silvia Rodríguez, Full time Distance Learning Student, Biblical Studies

Every Tuesday I sat in a quiet corner of my room to turn on my computer and open a door for a long trip. At first, I thought it was a mainly intellectual trip, where I would learn about stories, important characters; I would become more educated, knowledgeable and I would solve doubts. Over time I realized that I was entering a known world, where little by little I felt closer to the stories and the characters.

I realized that I was in front of a great work of art, the greatest of all, the history of Humanity; then I realized that I was part of that story. I was able to understand and feel experiences of

strong, loving, brave human beings, who also make mistakes, lie and doubt; in whom I discovered actions, feelings and situations that today resonate in my soul. I met some characters like Adam, Eve and the serpent. I felt how since then we have walked the Earth with pains and joys, avoiding temptations and receiving opportunities. I sailed with Noah in his ark and felt God's disappointment in our behavior, and how he baptized the Earth so that there would be a new dawn. I went up the mountain with Abraham and Isaac and discovered the true meaning of sacrifice. I admired Joseph's calm in the face of the brutality he suffered due to the actions of his brothers, as well as his constant trust in God, who was always by his side. I also felt deep compassion for Jacob, Joseph's father, when he lost his most beloved son. I got to know the lands through which all of them walked between rivers and deserts, between life and death. I heard how God called Moses who did not feel capable of acting before the divine mandates, and how he went through the challenge to reach the promised land, and carried the law written in stone.

All of them and others opened and announced the way so that one day John, a great human being, who cried out in despair in the desert, would witness the coming of Christ into the world. One day, he saw Jesus approaching the Jordan river to be baptized and how, with total openness, Jesus received Christ, to carry him on earth and walk with us. I learned the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples, the confidence and love that reigned between Mary and Jesus. I smelled the aroma of spikenard when Mary Magdalene anointed God's Son. And I also experienced the event of Golgotha that gave us a new awakening and changed us as human beings, giving us a new opportunity, the new Genesis.

During this trip I met the most extraordinary being, who sent by his Father, my Father, walks by my side in every good and bad moment that I need him. In my heart I carry a new light that expands, and I am certain that it lives in me. Now my prayer is truer. I discovered that the Bible is a masterpiece, that with each scene it opens a door. Now I know where I come from, and I know where I want to go. With greater confidence I walk in certainty. My family tree grew, and

*One taste of flesh of the fruit,
and we were blinded by the dust of ourselves –
mistaking a mirror for eyes.*

*Creator – Himself, fallen into form,
draws out the medicine from our poison.
One taste of the fruit of His flesh,
and we see.*

~ Sean Waters,
from a study on the word "Flesh"

I know that I am part of what is to come. I know that my actions, my feelings and my thoughts will help build the future. I carry the strength of all those who have come before me, and I know that those who will come after also depend on my walk. I feel part of the great family called humanity. I have more patience, compassion and love for all those who surround me near and far.

I leave my deep gratitude to Patrick Kennedy for opening the door of this journey, for taking us by the hand to the beginning of time and leaving the path open towards the future.

Fruits of the New Adam

by Nicole Reinhart, Full Time Student, Biblical Studies

One of the fruits of the Adam-tree will be a new organ of love, a resurrected human heart, and center of creation. Christ calls upon us to make a new community, into which a new heart can emerge. It is hard to imagine what this fruit will be like, but the Bible offers some pictures to ponder.

In Genesis it seems we are given one image of the heart. God breathes life into Adam, creates a garden, and plants him within it. In the center of the garden there are two trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. From Eden, a place of peace and harmony within the wilderness, a river divides into four rivers and flows out into four parts of the world. In this land there is gold, bdellium and onyx. All of this is created by God, and Adam lives within it. God warns Adam that if they eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, they will die, so, in the Garden, we also have the potential for a death process. Here we have all the aspects of the physiology of the human heart: a middle part where life and death are both present, four rivers that send life to and receive death from the body, and a place of peace in the center of outer activity.

In Revelations we find ourselves in a place of great activity, a city made of gold and precious gems. The river of the Water of Life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, through the middle of the street of the New Jerusalem. On either side of the river the Tree of Life stands, yielding twelve kinds of fruit. Now, instead of the tree being at the center, the river is at the center and the 12-fold tree encircles it. Notably, there is no mention of the Tree of Knowledge. However, we are given an element that does not exist in Genesis: the great high wall surrounding the city in rectilinear form—the square—a unique form that exists only within the mineral kingdom and earthly matter. Instead of a picture of potential death, we are given a picture of humanity's ability to take into themselves dead mineral and completely transform it into a new creation. In a certain sense, this picture has the elements of the first picture of the heart, but turned inside out.



Window artwork inspired by the class by Nicole Reinhart

In between these bookends we have the picture of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a human being in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. He is crucified on a tree, between two thieves, also on trees. One implores Christ to rescue him from his destiny—the one who, like Eve, would use Christ to evade God’s purpose for her and take matters into her own hands. And the other, who, like Cain rising up in anger against Abel, would condemn his brother to death. On the Cross, blood and life water of Christ flow out of his own ribs—the center of his

rhythmic life—and into the empty vault of the earth. He is buried in a new tomb, within a garden. After three days he overcomes death, and arises in a newly created human form, such that his closest companions cannot recognize him.

Christ sheds light upon the capacities we must bring to fruition if we are to travel the path between receivers of the heart God has given to us, and as co-creators of a new heart.

In the lonely desolation of the desert, when it can seem that God is silent, he shows us what it is to have faith in His workings. Christ’s faith allows him to stand upright when the crafty voice of the Serpent whispers into his ears and Sin knocks at the door of his heart. Even when he is most separate from God, Christ makes the choice to follow the will of God and not the opposing forces. Out of his love for the Father, Christ commits to what the Father has sent him to do with love in his heart.

As his death approaches, Christ offers his community of disciples a new commandment: “that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” The seed of this love was planted in the hearts of the Israelites when they were commanded to “Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and all of your soul and all of your might.” As the Israelites faltered again and again in their task to love God and uphold the Law, the Psalmists prayed that God

might “create in them a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Prophets foresaw a time when inner morality would replace an outer law, when God would “put the law within them, and write it on their hearts” — a time when the Law was no longer written on stone tablets, but on the “two-sided table of the heart”

How Wide the World

By Paul K Hooker

The world stands out on either side.

No wider than the heart is wide.

— “*Renascense*” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

How wide the world?

“No wider than the heart is wide.”

*Enough to gather in the storm
that tears not merely roof from hearth
but soul from soul as well?*

*Enough to bind the wounded orb
bleeding from every pore
weeping in every chirp and howl?*

*Enough to reach between nailed palms
opened out in love’s embrace,
‘til they circle ‘round the realm of pain.*

How wide the heart?

As wide as all the world is wide.

This love ripens in Christ, who calls the community around him friends, and not servants. What once was a love that streamed from above to below and from below to above, is now a love that also streams horizontally between the divine in every human being.

When we have begun to find both faith and love, we cannot be dismayed by all of the ways that we and our companions fall short. We must wait in hope, in steadfast expectation that the New Jerusalem will come to be in its rightful time. *“So now faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

As these three fruits ripen in the human being, we draw closer to the creation of the New Jerusalem, and a new human heart; not the heart of an individual person, but the heart that weaves among a community when all are willing to offer up the fruits of our own creation in service of others, into which the Godhead Himself can enter anew.

SECTION II: SEMINARY ON THE ROAD

A Year Connecting With the World-Wide Movement

by Patrick Kennedy & Jonah Evans

After all of the travel restrictions that descended upon the world during the time of Covid, it was especially moving to have the opportunity to travel to many places in the world and connect with many more people and communities in and beyond North America. In this section we share windows into a few of those events along with a list of when and where we traveled. You can find more about them on the Seminary Patreon «The Light in Every Thing» including audio reflections from us on some of the trips.

- ◆ *August 2022* - London, England (Jonah Evans)
- ◆ *September/October 2022* - Dornach, Switzerland; Colmar, France; Dortmund, Germany (Patrick Kennedy and Jonah Evans)
- ◆ *November 2022* - Kimberton, Pennsylvania, USA (Patrick Kennedy)
- ◆ *January 2023* - Sacramento, California, USA (Patrick Kennedy and Jonah Evans)
- ◆ *February 2023* - Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa (Jonah Evans)
- ◆ *March 2023* - Tampa, Florida, USA (Patrick Kennedy)
- ◆ *April 2023* - Edinburgh, Scotland; Dublin, Ireland (Patrick Kennedy and Jonah Evans)
- ◆ *August 2023* - New Zealand (Patrick Kennedy)
- ◆ *August 2023* - Australia (Patrick Kennedy and Jonah Evans)

“The Royal Priesthood”

by Cheryl Martine, Sacramento, California, January 20-22, 2023



This past week-end, we welcomed back into our community Rev. Patrick Kennedy and Rev. Jonah Evans to lead us into understandings and imaginations of our origins, journey and destiny of becoming, each of us, priest-kings. Together with our guides, it was as if we created a temple wherein we could grow more deeply into becoming lights in the darkness of our own souls and times, as we more profoundly unite ourselves with our True Self.

The weekend was filled with a rather extraordinary quality of heart-filled

warmth, laughter, contemplative learning and an ever-deepening experience of community, of our humanity. Our guides led us through a “remembering,” an imagining, of the vast horizons of our human journey weaving through the Bible from Genesis to Revelations, woven through the life of Christ Jesus and weaving into our own presence together in this time and place. We “remembered” our beginnings as One, our Fall into the darkness of materialism, and, now, our arising; our slow arduous reawakening to our heritage in the midst of this darkness - and our strivings to unite ourselves, to identify ourselves with Him who is our guide and strength on this journey.

We followed guiding, metamorphosing threads that run throughout the gospel - like the Garden in Eden, the Garden with cave at Golgotha, the city/garden of the New Jerusalem. We were led to recall that in the beginning there was One, He who breathed out into the Many. The Many have become individualized. We have become priest-kings in our own personal kingdoms, constituted of all those, living and dead, who have enabled us to become who we know ourselves to be: a community of one. That is us today, priest-kings in our own personal “kingdoms.” We were led to Him who can strengthen and guide us in our striving to weave our personal kingdoms into the New Community.

Further, we celebrated our humanity, our connectedness, as we shared Jonah and Patrick’s humility and joyful gratitude for their Waldorf school teachers who were present amongst us. We united with Jonah as he shared his story of his sick daughter asking: “How long will you carry me, Daddy?” “As long as you need me to” - and saw an expression of an eternal truth in

everydayness. We were further moved to witness the deeply engaged listening Patrick and Jonah had for each other; a picture of what we can all strive for in our own relationships.

In so many ways, we lived and breathed, learned and worked as a community as we listened, engaged in conversation and artistic activities, prepared meals, set tables, cleaned dishes, walked together down to the river.

Thank you, Patrick and Jonah. Thank you all for blessing us with this time to grow together.

“Cultivating a Relationship with the Etheric Christ”

by Bridgette Siepker, Johannesburg, South Africa, February 17-19, 2023



Jonah with the congregation in Johannesburg, Bridgette Siepker is third from the right

Since 2021 I have met and worked with people from all over the world sharing in their journey of coming to know Christ in the world and in their lives through the seminary’s DLP program. Both Jonah and Patrick have been central to this process and have helped to build a virtual community that has real substance.

You must now imagine my delight as I walked into the church community room on Friday evening in the midst of candle light (due to electricity “load shedding”) to hear the voice that

is so familiar to me in my online world now sounding in reality. It was really a joy to meet Jonah face to face and to experience him teaching out of his “whole physical body.”

Of course Jonah is no stranger to the Johannesburg community (Jonah worked in Johannesburg as a priest in the past), and it was evident that many remembered him and were grateful to reconnect with someone who had held a special place for them.

During the weekend Jonah took us on a journey where he was able to reveal signs and the pictures through which our eyes could be opened to recognize Christ in the world. It was also revealed how we might work with the Christ impulses as seeds within us to cultivate our own very personal relationship with Christ.

Many participating in the weekend workshop were happy to keep Jonah talking through tea and lunch breaks as we worked with ideas that had been presented and processed the multitude of questions that arose. Despite the obvious jet lag that always accompanies a long trip, Jonah never let on that he was suffering in any way, and availed himself with real enthusiasm in addressing all of our questions, concerns and considerations.

Before the beginning

Was God

Alone Sad

Begotten

One

In the beginning

God breathed life

Into words

Into beings

Forming man

In the end

We come together

One

As many

Facets

~ Donna Marcantonio,
composed during the «Seven
Heavens» conference

Some were able to have more private and quieter conversations about deeper questions they were carrying. There seemed to be an abundance of time, and Jonah was ever so generous.

It was most appropriate to have Jonah celebrate the Act of Consecration of the Human Being on Sunday morning.

Thank you to all who made it possible for Jonah to visit South Africa and to bring all that he did in his warm and sincere way. Thank you, Jonah.

“The Seven Heavens”

*by Sabrina Dalla Valle, Tampa, Florida, March 3-6,
2023*

The Seven Heavens Anthroposophical weekend retreat in Parrish, Florida drew in folks not only from all of Florida, but also from: North Carolina, Colorado, Tennessee, Basel (Switzerland), Maine, New York, and New Hampshire. The wind was unusual that Friday morning. It blew in from the Sahara Desert, swirling from all directions. The spirit of breath set the tone for Patrick Kennedy’s all in-spiring talks on our journey after death through the planetary realms into our new birth. As we would learn, our earthly life is fully woven into the fabric of our heavenly journey. What we came away with is knowing that Christ, the Sun Being,

has to be found on Earth in order to find him in the sphere of the Sun on our journey after death—and there are many ways to do so! The heart does the constant work of uniting Heaven and Earth.

We gathered at DaySpring Episcopal Conference Center nestled in an old Florida forest of bearded oaks; tall, rounded slash pines; and rugged cabbage palms. This 97-acre wilderness campus centers around a large spring and edges on the broad, slow, curving Manatee River.

The weekend was rich with activities that put to practice the insights from Patrick's talks. Felicia Campbell led our 63 voices through songs about the night, the dawn, and those who have passed over. Being a model of harmony within herself, she carried us into a three-part choir with immediacy and effortlessness. Carol Ann Williamson carefully guided all of us in concentric groups through Eurythmy forms to live this center to periphery dance of integrated life — along with fluid and heartfelt pianist accompaniment. Sabrina Dalla Valle brought a writing exercise linking 'verse' to 'universe' in a practice of Sun Beingness. Participants were led from their individual morning writing into small afternoon groups where they worked to unify each voice into a collective verse. We ended the night with a talent sharing, listening to the verses written in the day, original guitar songs played by different participants, jokes, and poems.

On Sunday, Herbert Hagens, our First Class reader, shared his grandfather's Anthroposophical Society cards — one signed by Rudolf Steiner, and the other by Ita Wegman. (These are the closest things we have to relics in this movement!) Joe Savage, another First Class reader, brought us to our final Sunday reflection in Goethean Conversation as we faced each other in 2 concentric circles. Standing in the center, he swirled his finger around like a quick wind and said, "This is the Grail, and when we gather under one ideal... the spirit enters." With his raised hand, he drew the spirit downward to show the Light quickening our inner flame. Joe's question



Patrick's sketch depicting the regions of the Seven Heavens

for us was, “How does your awareness of karma affect the world?” All could not be possible without the rich, deep soul strength of Barbara Bedingfield who for 18 years, with the help of the Waldorf School of Tampa Bay, has diligently organized this annual retreat.

“Priesthood of All”

by Matthias Seidel & Rodnie Whitlock, New Zeland, July, 2023



Patrick with New Zealand Priests: Hartmut Borries on the left and Cheryl Prigg on the right

Would I remain an “outsider” in an already bonded weekend community, since I was only able to join in Saturday afternoon? This rational reflection, and perhaps even more appropriate “fear of missing out”, is based on a fundamental uncertainty of biography: what is “community” all about? From my own experience, isn’t it much more productive to lock myself away in a quiet room studying, praying, and meditating? It was relieving to observe a rare kind of familiarity, a mood of mutual interest and appreciation within the group of around 25 participants. How did that happen so quickly, in a group which usually doesn’t meet – as members of other regions had joined only on this occasion? Somehow the heartfelt warm welcome of individuals’ contributions, and the compassionate explanation Patrick gave of difficult concepts such as peace, grace, spiritual light, love combined in Thinking and Feeling, and over time (over the night) returned as “self-evident”. What a blessing that I and we as a group EXPERIENCED the GRACE of “knowing and feeling” in our heart about Community and Consecration of the Human Being.

Adding two aphoristic snippets does not give credence to the developed feeling of a strong bond to Christ within the Community, but it shall be attempted: When encountering

another human being, attention and interest is mirrored in the other's soul and is reflected back as Spiritual Light. Taking at the communion Christ's Blood, it lives in us as Christ's thinking, suffering, and death – and revelation. Christ has come to be alive within his Community: he is experienced as LOGOS OF LOVE in contrast to an individual's power of intellect.

Thank you from our heart, for coming to New Zealand, dear Patrick, and giving enthusiasm for and power to our bond to Christ, Community, and the Future.

Matthias Seidel

We were extremely privileged to receive a first-time visit to New Zealand of Rev Patrick Kennedy, a co-director of The Christian Community Seminary in Toronto. This was a remarkable and well-attended gathering where we were all taken on a journey covering topics such as Priesthood of All, Sacrament of Consultation, Love, Old Testament links to the life of Christ Jesus, and ever so much more! Patrick has the remarkable ability to speak in depth and in detail but so totally from the heart that the experience becomes more significant than the actual content. The stillness and silence in the chapel as he was speaking told its own story, and we were left in no doubt of his conviction of the reality of Christ's presence at all times, available to all if we can but open ourselves to it. At the end, questions from people's hearts flowed freely, indicating our desire for "More, please!" Patrick, you touched our hearts. We often lingered in the chapel long after you had left the room, sharing what had opened up for us from your talks. Thank you for making the long journey to New Zealand and giving us your time and a truly memorable weekend.

Rodnie Whitlock

"Destiny as Crucible"

by Qin Qin, Sydney, Sydney, Australia, 4-13 August, 2023

The priests in Australia, especially Ioanna Panagiotopoulos from Canberra and Lisa Devine from Sydney, organized, led and invited Patrick and Jonah to participate in a ten day course in Mittagong, Australia. In addition they were joined by fellow priests Damien Gilroy from Adelaide and Cheryl Nekvapil from Melbourne.

"The Harmony Centre", Mittagong, Southern Highlands, Australia: 20 or so mostly strangers sat around in a circle in the conference room, starting the getting to know each other process with an icebreaker activity. But this was not quite the usual icebreaker questions one might expect.

"What was the religious or spiritual environment of your upbringing?" Patrick asked, looking around at us — a mixed group ranging from early 20s to a few decades older, hailing from across Australia. "What might be a 'holy moment' in your childhood? How did you come to The Christian Community? What questions are you coming here with?"



Qin Qin (on the left) and other participants of the conference during the hike

We scribbled away, reflecting on these questions before sharing. I'd never thought about moments in my early life when I'd experienced awe or reverence, let alone spoken about such topics in a group before.

But that's why we had gathered here, drawn by exploring deeper aspects of The Movement for Religious Renewal and grappling with the central question, "how can our destiny become an offering for the future of Humankind?"

The intensive was run as a seminary experience with Patrick and Jonah, the leaders of the North American Seminary, and Cheryl, Damien, Ioanna and Lisa, four Australian priests.

'It's a lot!' Lisa told me. 'Try to have one main takeaway each day.' That was good advice to prepare for what was to come.

Each day started and ended with a service, and a mix of lectures, discussions, and creative expression. The ten days were experiences of profound explorations of inner worlds — spiritual, physical, emotional -- that continue on. We shared delicious food, laughter, four part harmonies, stories and tears, supporting each other in our quest for deeper understanding and connection to God.



Participants of the conference in Mittagong

Each morning service started with a new lens to understand the Act of Consecration of the Human Being, leading to a deeper experience of the service. Each evening, the sermons by different priests reflected on our daily experiences, guiding us to carry our reflections into our sleep and the realm of the spirit for further processing.

My body felt alive moving through the elements and sounds that Ioanna took us through. We learnt from Judith Wright's poem "The Wattle Tree", and befriended different letters and sounds. Singing with Damien helped us practice confidence in our individual voices and as a group in harmony.

During Patrick's lectures, we learnt about trees and 'tree work' as a way to illustrate the mysteries of faith, and delved into who Jesus was in relation to others. In discipleship, we considered the discipline of spiritual life through meditation, devotional practices such as looking with eyes of gratitude, and moral work. Jonah focused on 'The Holy Wound' concept, with the archetype of Jesus as the wounded healer showing us new meaning for our pain and afflictions.

Lisa's festival culminated in acting out different scenes of confronting our shadows/doubles, and eventually transforming the darkness through levity. Midway through the intensive, we had a day to rest, and some of us went for a hike, exploring nature and the gloriously rich Australian bushland as our teacher.

As the intensive came to a close, we sat once again in the conference room, no longer as strangers. ‘How would you describe how you felt at the start, middle and end?’ Ioanna asked us. We created a tapestry of our experiences through words, bound by our shared understanding of Destiny as Crucible, and the explorations of how the lead within could become the gold we were meant to be.

“Buckets of Love”

by Vaike Neeme-Samson, Sydney, Australia, 4-13 August, 2023

The intensive run by Patrick and Jonah in Mittagong (Sydney, Australia) was many things; an introduction to the Christian Community for some, a deepening for others, an orientation to priesthood for a few and also a youth gathering. I came with an open soul and knew I would learn, but what I hadn’t expected was to receive such medicine.

The word ‘crucible’ was in the title given to this schooling week, and that it was: the flame that allowed this time to act as such was both intense in its shaping, and healing in its shining warmth.

Our thinking and our experiences were both enkindled until they entwined, such as in our meditative work with trees where we came to see them, to know them and then through that seeing-knowing to perceive the spirit. We learnt to long for His love with the same undisclosed need that the branch reveals in its sun-ward reach.

Our knowledge quest became an unexpected drenching in the love of Christ Jesus. We softened, and through this melting, other conversations – both within and without – became possible; there were new ways of seeing and much letting go as we became brave enough to bare and offer our wounds.

We realized that this week was not to be a study of what could happen one day, but an actual happening, in real time, where nothing was extraneous; every moment, whether sacred or profane, every thought, deed or feeling, whether awake or asleep, every conversation with those present or loved ones back home became part of it.

Patrick and Jonah made their doors so open to each and every one of us continually, and it was as beautiful to behold others becoming through these communions as it was to experience it for myself. Every fellow traveller became dear. Upon multiple reflections, this sense of accompaniment grows stronger until I realize — of course — who was there too the whole time. It is still in the memory and even right now as I write; for ‘were not our hearts on fire?’ — and aren’t they still!

Throughout the week I experienced my soul turn upwards and be led into rooms within that I have not visited before; a new path, a different way – one that I can keep bearing towards. I pray to have the courage to keep surrendering to this.

At the final service, our voices in song – gently coaxed throughout the week to become an unabashed offering – revealed the community that the spirit had woven us into over just a few precious days.

Patrick's last evening sermon spoke of a bucket line of love that was cascading over, through and between us all, and that we had the possibility – the responsibility – and the joy of passing this love on to all who, for many reasons, had not been able to be present, and indeed, onwards and outwards endlessly.

Thank you to every being that made this possible. In gratefully seeking we have so bountifully received, and in learning to serve we newly feel how lovingly we are held

FUNDRAISING APPEAL FOR 2023-2024



Dear Friends!

In this newsletter we have shared with you many of the journeys that we undertook around the world to bring the heart of the Seminary into more and more communities and people's lives. But since September (and as you can see in the photo above) a whole new year of Seminary begun! As I write this, the Seminary is on a journey to bring its eleven students back to where our movement originated. We all have landed in Frankfurt, Germany and are on our way to the Seminary in Stuttgart. Five of our students have been recommended for ordination preparation and will travel to Berlin for a meeting with our leadership. Such a massive travel Event involves many flights, trains, and buses, to pull it off! Please consider making a special generous donation to support this travel and the final stages of preparation for ordination that lie before our students.

The Light in Every Thing podcast is now over three years old. Its audience has grown substantially since its humble beginnings on Easter, 2020. We know from streaming data that

our listeners span over 73 countries and six continents. Our Patreon community has also grown to over 380 patrons, who contribute \$3-\$40 monthly. Through their support, the seminary grows closer to its goal of a priests training fully subsidized by the free gifts of individuals. Our hope this year is to continue to expand the reach of *The Light in Every Thing* and inspire people to support the mission of the seminary in thought, word and deed. To that end, you can now find the podcast on Instagram and Facebook, as well as on all your favorite streaming platforms and Patreon.

Below you can find the ways of donation and helping the work of the Seminary. If you already are a regular contributor, thank you so much! We are deeply grateful.

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Our circle of support is essential for our thriving, and we do our utmost to stay connected and share with you in many ways. Our newsletter, the Friends Circle email list, the podcasts and special Patreon content, and our monthly Friends Circle zoom call are all ways you can stay connected with us and learn more.

May you feel encouraged and blessed by the One who unites human beings, strengthens our will and offers his peace,

Patrick Kennedy *Jonah Evans*

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