

## new catholic times

*sensus fidelium*

**Gather, Join, Commit, Support, Strive**

### The Taproot Community

Posted by: **Editor** on Mon, 20 October 2008 01:00:00

***Both within and beyond the Taproot liturgies, the community joins to strengthen our faith journey, inspired by the life and message of Jesus.***

On the second and fourth Sunday morning of each month, around 25 people climb the stairs to a second floor room over a Book City on a busy Toronto street. The Taproot Community numbers about 40: some have moved away but keep in touch electronically; others come intermittently and still others come regularly.



At these gatherings and collected in a circle around a centerpiece that includes bread and wine to share, we sing, we pray and we draw inspiration from the liturgy of the day. The community prayers offer the chance to share our concerns about the challenges facing our families, our friends and those in need of God's grace the world over: we have prayed often in the last year for the monks of Myanmar/Burma.

Each liturgy is prepared by a community member who has volunteered to research and think about the readings before sharing and inviting reflections on the text. These gatherings fulfill one part of our five-part mission: to gather as a community and to create and celebrate liturgies that are rooted in the Christian/Catholic tradition and in our present experiences.

Both within and beyond the Taproot liturgies, the community joins to strengthen our faith journey, inspired by the life and message of Jesus. Just a year ago, not long after the publication of Marcus Borg's *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*, copies circulated among the community and our summer reading on decks and porches focused on this remarkable work.

Those who could, gathered one Sunday afternoon for a discussion of several points in the book. Some, familiar with Borg's other works, added particular insights to our discussion which we then continued on line. All the while, the multiple "lenses" of writer and readers deepened our understanding of Jesus and the ways we align his message with our individual and community lives in the early 21st century.

Like Jesus, the ultimate activist, we commit to work for justice and compassion in the world, in solidarity with other people striving towards similar ends. Homelessness continues to be an issue in our city: challenging the political structures to reduce homelessness and increase the affordable housing stock means tracking, lobbying and calling for accountability. Taproot Community members have volunteered time, energy and commitment to the Homeless Acton Group (HAG) and the Toronto Disaster

Relief Committee (TDRC) and currently are actively supporting the MultiFaith Alliance to End Homelessness (MFATEH).

Often, a friend will come to our Liturgy to ask for support for a particular social justice issue: we sign petitions, post bulletins, attend rallies and spread the good news of solidarity and compassion at work. Our concerns are global: at Christmas we join Amnesty International's campaign to send greetings and cards of support to prisoners of conscience around the globe.

Throughout the year there are monthly gatherings for Bible Study under the guidance of those with more training and experience in theological study than some others of us. Our liturgies are enriched by new insights on the readings of the day that members have shared with one another. Between gatherings, we recommend articles, journals and books that have inspired us and our list-serve hums with news of upcoming lectures and seminars on topics related to our faith. The annual retreat on a fall weekend is particularly nourishing and those who attend Call to Action always share the news from this gathering. In these and other ways, we work to support each other in our efforts to live out the Gospel message and to educate ourselves about matters related to our faith.

It is almost two years since the writer first joined the Taproot Community. One characteristic of this group that has struck me most is the recognition of each member's gifts and the opportunities for those gifts to be spread among us. There is no deference to authority as there is no authority. Managing our money, preparing the food for our gatherings, maintaining our e-mail list, sharing our homes for seasonal gatherings, recommending music for our liturgies, writing the annual review, planning the retreat and many more quiet, supportive and necessary activities draw on the gifts of the community without any strictures or rules. In this sharing of our community gifts and under the guidance of our Planting Committee who complete two- year terms on a rotating basis, we strive to be an expression of the renewed church in our living as a discipleship of equals.

Gather, join, commit, support, strive. These are the verbs of our Taproot Community. These guide us in our faith journey as Christians in this, our time.

**Brigid O'Reilly joined the Taproot Community late in 2006.**