

THRONED IN HUMILITY

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THRONED IN HUMILITY

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RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese.

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

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Cover: [Alexander Kaufmann](#)



Faith Matters: Throned in Humility

“Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.”¹ The centurion is a strong example of someone who holds real power in his time and place (the Roman Empire), yet remains aware that he is not the greatest or most powerful being. People listen to him; people respect his authority (as seen in Matthew 8:9). He could easily fall into hubris, but his humility tempers it. One might even ask: without this humility, would he have recognized Jesus?

Throughout his life, he has likely learned and honed many skills and talents. We can reasonably assume he knows he can fight, command, and strategize. In the throes of battle, others would undoubtedly rely on his experience, expertise, and judgment. Yet he also knows he is neither a miracle worker nor healer. In this moment, we see a man who has witnessed much death now confronted with the suffering of his servant. The centurion shows us that humility necessitates honesty.

Like him, we can recognize our talents and skills and hopefully use them to serve others and honour God. Yet, we must also recognize the moments when those same abilities are insufficient—when we must acknowledge that we cannot control a situation and instead surrender it to the One who can move mountains even with faith as small as a mustard seed.

¹ Matthew 8:8

We pray an intentionally similar sentiment at the beginning of the Prayer of Humble Access just before we receive Communion: “We do not presume to come to this your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant and great mercies.” This is one of my favourite parts of the Mass. We pour out these words at the threshold of receiving the immeasurable gift of the Holy Eucharist—and it reminds me that I have done nothing to earn such a gift. It is given purely by the grace of God, received for the healing of mind, body, and soul. This is the grace and mercy of God in action, and its richness is made more apparent with humility, and the honesty which necessitates it.

May we all aspire to be like the centurion—fully aware of our strengths, talents, and skills, yet also attentive to where the strengths, talents, and skills of others are needed, and when to yield our sense of control. And most of all, may we learn when to let go and turn to God as our help and our strength. When we open our hearts and minds to God, we are not only echoing the centurion’s faith—we are pointing to the Word made flesh, who speaks not from afar, but who enters under our roof.

Our authors all provide different viewpoints on where humility can be found and what it means for each of them. Anil Pinto-Gfroerer presents Maundy Thursday’s foot washing as an example of humble service. Ben Girgis tells of the life of St. Antony the Great and how he (and those around him) showed and lived a life of humility. Tanis Kolisnyk explains how the wolf is an excellent symbol of humility, especially in many Indigenous cultures. Lastly, Donna Royer explains how the labour of cleaning windows can help us look deeper into ourselves.

Peace be with you; I hope you enjoy this issue.



CINNA BARAN

Editor of Rupert’s Land News



Photo: [Thays Orrico](#)

Receiving the Fragrant Oil: the art of humility

ANIL PINTO-GFROERER

Today, I speak to you from the depths of Holy Week. Maundy Thursday is nigh upon us, and I have entered this week in the way I do all Holy Weeks – scattered and a bit destroyed from the wiles of March. If you are like me and have found yourself worn out by Lent and by March on the prairies, it is my hope that this letter will find you in the joy of Eastertide and revelling in the thawing sun of April. In this interest, I beg your forgiveness as I pull us back into Lent (for a brief moment) to discuss what humility means.

When asked to contemplate humility, the first images which came to my mind were those of humble service performed by people in authority. One of the more prominent vignettes which entered my mind was the act of service performed annually on Maundy Thursday. As a young child attending church, I was always struck by the solemnity with which the priest would kneel and begin to wash parishioners' feet. There

was an odd vulnerability which hung in the air on that night. The parish I grew up in was centred around communing with God intellectually, and so the embodiment of this action also felt out of place and uncomfortable. As I grew up, this sensation lingered, and even when I left my home church and moved to another church, which was more Anglo-Catholic and required more bodily engagement in worship (in the form of genuflecting and making the sign of the cross), the awkward beauty of this event remained. I believe that this discomfort is a common experience among people who witness this ritual.

Thinking back on this practice, it seems to demonstrate humility in a different way than one would expect – not only as an act of giving but also as an act of receiving. The priest lowers themselves to the cold and silty floor while the parishioner sheepishly peels off the grubby socks of winter (undoubtedly a few specks of lint remain). The vulnerability of both priest and parishioner is laid bare in this action. It seems to be one of the great tragedies of our age that we are schooled away from this type of vulnerability, a vulnerability which is central to the embodied experience of Maundy Thursday.



Photo: [Buddha Elemental 3D](#)

The demand of this odd vulnerability is part of the reason why this ritual, from its very conception, has been shrouded in confusion, discomfort, and awe. John the Evangelist describes the moment, soon before Jesus is sent to be crucified, when He kneels to wash his disciples' feet. He writes: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God... poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet."¹ John continues on, describing the reaction of one of the disciples: "Then cometh He to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"² Peter does not want his master and Lord to handle his dust-mottled feet. But then Jesus speaks to him and says, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter...If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."³

In this scene, Jesus himself acknowledges the mystery inherent in this action by stating that the disciples will not be able to understand what He is doing until a later time.

However, He also draws specific attention to the importance of it by directing His disciples to do likewise to each other and to those they serve.⁴ In His explanation of this service, He repeats the word "receive."⁵ Although He is specifically stating that people who receive the teaching and service given by His disciples will receive the Love of Christ and thereby the Love of the Father, He is also highlighting the importance of receptivity.

In his book *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams writes on the humility of Christ, saying: "He is someone who

¹ John 13:3-5 (KJV)

² John 13:6 (KJV)

³ John 13:7-8 (KJV)

⁴ John 13:14-15 (KJV)

⁵ John 13:20 (KJV)

is in a relationship of dependence on the one He prays to as Father. In Him there is divine purpose, power, and action; but there is also humility, responsiveness, receptivity.”⁶ Williams goes on to describe what this means for us. He says, “We are no less in God’s image when we acknowledge our dependence or when we offer thanks than when we are making decisions or showing God’s love to another.”⁷ Therefore, humility is not solely about offering oneself to the world in service and love (although this is important and necessary), it is also about receiving the world – about remaining permeable to its gifts as well as attentive to its pain.



Photo: [Andrey Soldatov](#)

In the chapter before the washing of feet, John describes (what I take to be) one of the most beautiful scenes in the whole Bible. In this chapter, a woman from Bethany washes Jesus’ feet with her hair. This woman, who is named in the Gospel of John as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is also described in the Gospel of Luke as a woman of great sin.⁸ In an act of profound love, she breaks open a jar of perfumed oil and pours it over Jesus’ feet – rinsing them with her tears. Although Judas Iscariot, the one who will betray Him, chides Jesus for accepting this expensive gift which could have been given to the poor, He accepts her gift with deep humility.⁹ Jesus shows himself, in these two sequences, to be full of great humility both in the position of generosity and in the position of receptivity.

So how does this idea of humility interact with modern western culture? The excerpt taken from Rowan Williams, referenced above, concludes with the notion that Christ-like humility understood (in part) as receptivity isn’t “an easy message for a world... in love with the ideal of absolute self-sufficiency.”¹⁰ It is my belief that this ideal comes from the over-prevalent fear in our culture of disappointment and rejection. People fear needing others precisely because they believe their desires to be impossible for them to live up to. More often than not, people are afraid to be in a position of receiving, not because of pride, but because they do not want to be a burden to those around them. They believe themselves to be too much and for others to be not enough. Humans are indeed too much, and no one will ever fully satisfy our desires or needs perfectly, save the One who satisfies all. However, I do not believe that we are called to stop desiring or needing things from others – to self-contain.

Jesus highlights what the call truly is at the end of John chapter thirteen. After the disciples’ feet have been cleaned, He delivers his last commandment. This commandment is the summation of all the commandments given prior: “That ye love one another as I have loved you.”¹¹ Within the context of these words, Christ reveals that in order to enter into His

⁶ Will McDavid, “Rowan Williams on the Power and the Weakness,” [Mockingbird](#), February 12, 2013

⁷ McDavid, “Rowan Williams on the Power and the Weakness.”

⁸ John 12:3; Luke 7:37

⁹ John 12:4-5; Luke 7:44-48

¹⁰ McDavid, “Rowan Williams on the Power and the Weakness.”

¹¹ John 13:34 (KJV)



Photo: [Miguel Alcantara](#)

love, it is just as imperative to receive as it is to give. What is central to this commandment is the interaction between people. In this word, we are told three key things. Firstly, that we are called to relinquish ourselves to others – both in service and in need. Secondly, we are taught to practice imperfect love as a means of entering into the flow of His love. Thirdly, we are taught that if the word is Love, then the activity of self-containment is futile.

While contemplating our Christian task of humility, it is revealed that this practice of receptivity is absolutely crucial. Humanity, in its fallen state, will forever be unable to accept the immense gift of Love poured out on the cross. However, the work of our lives as Christians is to try to remain receptive to it. And so, with all of the events of Holy Week laid out for us, pouring forth into spring like sweet perfume,

let us endeavour daily to acknowledge the immense gift we have been given and to stand in awe of it. Let us enter into this Eastertide profoundly leaning on the Love which surrounds us.



ANIL PINTO-GFROERER

Anil Pinto-Gfroerer is a recent graduate of the University of King's College, Halifax, and is a lover of art history. She currently works as a bookkeeper and is part of the congregation of St. Margaret's Anglican Church. She spends most of her free time with her friends Seika and Iona, eating junk food and conversing about the world.

The Humility of St. Anthony

BEN GIRGIS

Photo: [Luiz Neto](#)

In the fourth year of my undergrad, I took a course titled “Prayer in the Christian Tradition.” In this course, we looked at various figures, praying styles, and books referring to prayer (a number of which I have referenced in my previous articles). One that caught my attention was a figure named St. Athanasius of Alexandria. Now, Athanasius is not typically known for prayer in theological and Christian circles; he’s typically known for his treatise on the Incarnation, titled “On the Incarnation.” Most Western Christians and seminarians are introduced to this hard theological Athanasius, but I was not. I was introduced to St. Athanasius who prays the Psalms. After college, I purchased a copy of Athanasius’ letter to Marcellinus, in which he speaks about the Psalms. At the beginning of the book, there is a story of St. Antony (or St. Anthony as Western Christians refer to him), and it invited me to reflect on my own faith.

St. Athanasius’ hagiography on his friend St. Antony tells the story of a rich man having his world transformed greatly by the words of Christ and being led by the Spirit to go into the desert to live life as a monastic. The miracles that he performed sparked wonder in all that saw and heard of them, from healing a little girl with a skin disease to crossing a river infested with crocodiles. A constant throughout all of his stories is how he relies on God—even during his temptations, which are a major part of his story. However, as you read about his life, it’s not the miracles that invite you to reflect on yourself; it’s the posture that he took—just like many of the Desert Fathers and Mothers—that invites reflection. I would go so far as to say that there are no others humbler than the Desert Fathers and Mothers.



Osservanza Master, *Saint Anthony the Abbot in the Wilderness*,
ca. 1440, tempera and gold on wood

St. Antony did not regard himself as the greatest monk (he offered that title to St. Paul of Thebes); he regarded himself as a man who simply followed our Saviour's words: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven."¹ Humility was a spiritual discipline for them, and what encouraged them was the struggle of living a life that was so simple: to eat only bread, drink only water, and live in exile focusing solely on walking with the Spirit through prayer, fasting, and the meditation of Scripture. Like Christ, they empty themselves. Taking on the form of a slave, they humbled themselves and became obedient to the point of death.²

For Antony, this was not a quick thing to learn. Rather, he was a disciple of zealous men outside his village. These men taught him the importance of prayer, grace, freedom of anger, and the human concern of another. Antony spends the first few years with these men before he goes off into the desert to pursue a hermit life. Not much is known about this period of his life, but it seems to have been very beneficial for Antony as this time taught him about true discipleship. This time in St. Antony's life invites us to look at what humility is:

¹ Matthew 19:21

² Philippians 2:7-8



Photo: [Anne Nuyard](#)

dependence. In order for us to look at humility, we must look at discipleship, dependence, and trust. They are not separate things, but rather conjoined. It's one of the things that invites Antony into the desert, as Athanasius says, "he considered while he walked how the apostles, forsaking everything, followed the Saviour, and how in Acts some sold what they possessed and took the proceeds and placed them at the feet of the apostles for distribution among those in need, and what great hope is stored up for such people in heaven."³

For the Disciples, to have nothing and to follow Christ made them rely on the community around them—and on Christ himself. They left everything behind to simply learn and trust that everything would be for the better. For the Church in Acts, they gave everything to care for the poor, and trusted that the Apostles and the Church would care for them as well. Likewise, St. Antony trusted in his community, in the Church, and in the Spirit to provide and guide him in his simple yet difficult life.

Though St. Antony eventually withdrew from a larger community to live alone, he is not separate from the Body of Christ. In fact, he is intimately a part of the Body of Christ. For the Desert Fathers and Mothers, the Church is very important to them; it is a part of their whole being. As Athanasius reminds us:

"Through the sort of man he was, he honored the rule of the Church with extreme care, and he wanted every cleric to be held in higher regard than himself. He felt no shame at bowing the head to the bishops and priests; if even a deacon came to him for assistance, he discussed the things that are beneficial, and gave place to him in prayer, not being embarrassed to put himself in a position to learn. For indeed, often he would raise questions and ask to hear from those with him. And he acknowledged that he was helped if someone said anything useful."⁴

In our very western world, we can be like Ryan from *The Office* when he says, "I want leadership. But don't just, like, boss me around, you know? Like, lead me. Lead me... when I'm in the mood to be led." But Antony was not Western by any means; he was a person of his time—Coptic in the 3rd

century. Hierarchy, especially church hierarchy, was a very important thing for the people of their day. For Antony, there is no monastic life without the Church, and there is no Church without bishops, deacons, and clergy. In a time with persecution and instability, Antony and other lay people relied heavily on the teachings from the bishops—especially when education was not available for all people. For us in our modern period, we may not understand this, but we live in a time when instability and uncertainty exist, and we need to trust in our bishops, clergy, and deacons. Our roles as disciples, like Antony, are to learn and serve, and it takes humility to be led.

If I may be personal, over this year I have been serving at All Saints Anglican Church as an intern. I have 15 years of church ministry experience; I have worked and led in church and para-church ministries across 6 different denominations. I went to college and got a BA in Christian Ministry and a minor in Biblical Studies. I would like to think that I know a thing or two about what it means to serve in the Church. But, every week, I make my way to All Saints, and simply do as I am told and trust that what I am learning will benefit me in my discipleship. In my internship, I am called to lessen myself and grow from others. I make myself available, not to lead, but to be led. I regularly have to put my pride aside and simply do as I am asked because it takes humility to be led.

We often want to do things ourselves, but for the Desert Fathers and Mothers, a reliance on others points us toward humility. Their focus was on the calling of the Spirit, and the Spirit calls us and them to be with one another and to be in the Body of Christ. St. Antony's transformation starts in the Church and continues in the Church. His transformation inspires the Church to look toward the one who transforms—toward the one who came and was humbled so that we might be humbled. Let us take the form of a servant and live simple lives that focus on the good things and the important things: the things of God.



BEN GIRGIS

Ben Girgis lives with his spouse, Kaitlyn, in the city of Winnipeg, and is currently serving as a Parish Intern at All Saints Anglican Church. Previously, you would have found him sitting in the back pews at St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church.

¹ Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, trans. Robert C. Gregg (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 31

² Athanasius, *The Life of Antony*, 81



Photo: Yannick Menard

Humility Walking a Pathway of Gratitude and Servanthood

TANIS MCLEOD KOLISNYK

In our Christian faith, humility is rooted in the very character of God revealed in the life of Jesus Christ. In this reflection, I will explore humility through an Indigenous Christian lens and attempt to find some common threads that bring our understandings together.

The Indigenous peoples of this Land have treasured and cared for the wisdom of the Seven Sacred Teachings, passing it down from generation to generation. In these teachings, the wolf represents humility and models it. When you consider wolf behaviour, this beautiful animal lives for the good of the pack, not for individual dominance. The wolf survives through cooperation, loyalty, and awareness of interdependence. One of my favourite wolf teachings is that humility recognizes that one's gifts are not owned but entrusted—given for the well-being of the community.

In this Anglican Church that I love, I have the joy of serving as a Deacon, part of a servant ministry, bringing the needs of the world back to the Church. I have been entrusted with this responsibility, and one of the blessings is that I have seen many talented people use their gifts of caring and sharing in our communities. Some examples include meal or refreshment preparations for after services, using their gift of hospitality for visitors, meeting with the community members who come to the Epiphany Food Pantry ministry, or generous folks who collect items for Rupert's Land Wechetowin efforts to help others beyond our church walls. In other cases, we find talented people who take on roles as Wardens, Vestry representatives, or serve on national committees like ACIP or Diocesan Counsels. I bet you know people who are humble servants too. I think that people who generously use the gifts they have been entrusted with are acting in humility, even though we may not always recognize it as such. They help whomever they can—serving for the good of the pack.

Humility is often misunderstood as weakness or silence. Yet, in both Indigenous and Christian worldviews, humility is not that at all; it is about standing as we are, neither shrinking nor inflating ourselves. Having the posture of reverence is not always an easy task in the world we find ourselves in. Knowing and behaving in a manner that reflects that we are not the centre of creation is contrary to many normative ways of everyday activity. Humility is claiming interdependence, admitting that we need each other. That is not weakness but rather self-awareness. As people of God, we try to remember that we belong to something larger than ourselves, and we intentionally use our gifts to serve the community when possible.

The Gospel message shows that Jesus continues to take the form of a servant during His time with us. Christ models leadership in the Gospel of John when He kneels to wash feet. Authority bends down; reverence expresses itself through service. An excellent example of this is in John 13:1-17. Take time to read the whole passage. If we move towards verse 16, Jesus says to us, "Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." Jesus modelled divine self-giving, not weakness, showing vulnerability in his love for each of us. This was a gift of humility and servanthood. To walk with wolf humility is to lead in ways that preserve the dignity of others.

I think another common thread can be found in the actions of listening before speaking. Jesus had power yet did not misuse it. He holds influence carefully and, in practicing humility, we also have opportunities to do so in our everyday lives, whether we are parents, teachers, elders, clergy, or community leaders. Humility may look like restoration instead of humiliation, as we resist the urge to correct, control, or claim authority over others. We will need to continue to hold fast to truth-telling and be ready to open the doors for transformation to take place in each of us. We are all works in progress, are we not? Understanding ourselves as unfinished may help us live with an awareness of possibly becoming gentler with ourselves and with others.



At times, I struggle to know when to lead and when to follow. Knowing when to be assertive and when to yield requires discernment when we remember to frame actions in humility. The prophet Micah writes: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk

humbly with your God?”¹ The phrase “walk humbly” echoes the Indigenous spiritual language of “walking in a good way.” When I read this passage, it connects with my Indigenous understandings to try our best to live in balance, relational accountability, and respect for Creation. Both traditions frame faith as a way of walking, a way of being called to spiritual maturity and knowing one’s place in the circle. I love how elders often encourage us to take the risk of walking outside our comfort zones, because sometimes we will get it right. During those times when I fall short or get something wrong, I am so very happy I have a God of grace who helps me on this journey to learn from my mistakes.

Even if I look outside Scripture, it is clear how important humility is in spiritual maturation. There is a book by Raymond Aldred and Matthew Anderson called *Our Home and Treaty Land*, in which they emphasize that walking in humility is about orientation, with a heart that recognizes Covenant in how we carry ourselves in this time of reconciliation. This will include walking with the land, with community and with truth. If we can remember to recognize land as a gift, and ourselves as caretakers instead of owners, we have a chance of being closer to the heart of the Gospel message.

I trust that God’s Spirit will direct our pathway and probably take us out of our comfort zone at times. That is exciting and a bit daunting in the same breath. I see in both my Indigenous and Christian teachings that humility requires us to intentionally walk, listen, and serve faithfully, always remembering that we belong to something larger than ourselves. May God continue to help us be reminded of the examples of humility we have learned about today, and may we apply those teachings as we continue to ask God to be with us on a good path for tomorrow. Amen.

¹ Micah 6:8



TANIS MCLEOD KOLISNYK

Rev. Deacon Tanis is Red River Métis and serves at Epiphany Indigenous Anglican Church in Winnipeg and St Bartholomew’s Anglican Church in Winnipeg Beach. She is designated as a Knowledge Keeper by the Elders Circle of the Diocese of Rupert’s Land, is entrusted with coordinating Rupert’s Land Wechetowin diocesan initiatives, and has taught for many years at various institutes throughout Winnipeg.

Dispatches from the Hermitage:
Window Cleaning

DONNA ROYER

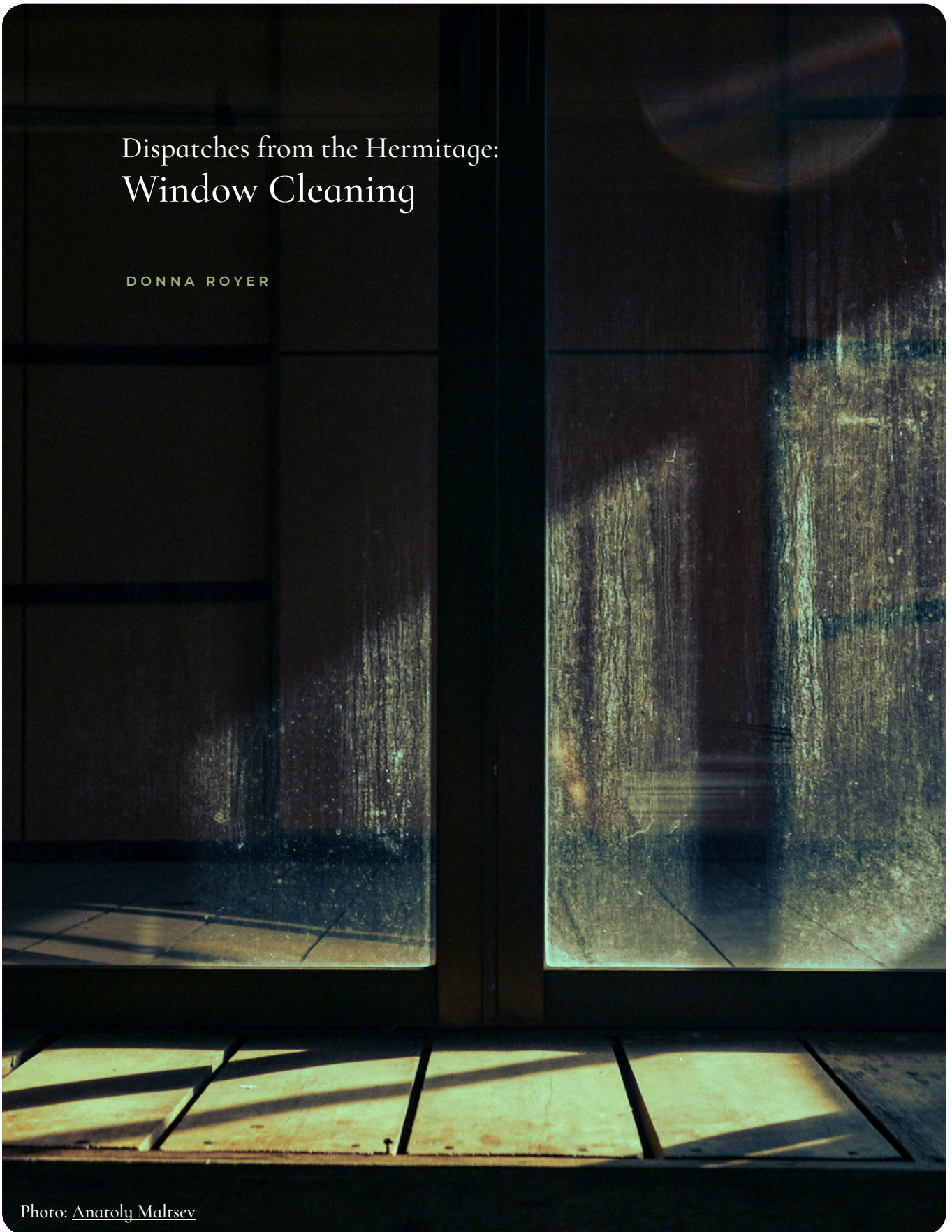


Photo: [Anatoly Maltsev](#)

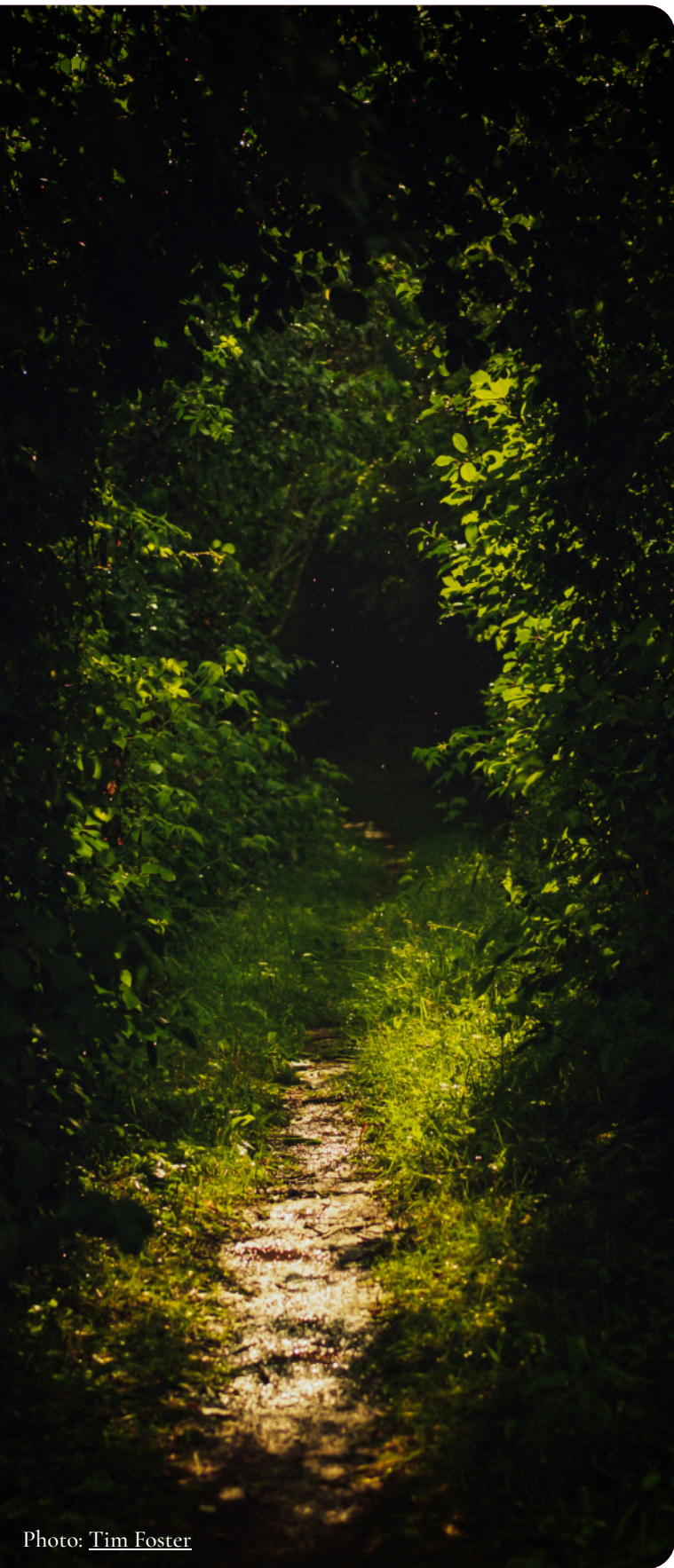


Photo: [Tim Foster](#)

For many years, the windows of my hermitage were the old, wood-sashed, multi-paned, wavy glass common to an upper floor “character” apartment in central Winnipeg. Each autumn I’d stuff the cracks with rags, wash the inside glass, and seal the window with a thin sheet of plastic so that I could look out without the bitter winter wind coming in. Here, in my new rural hermitage, I don’t need to do much to the windows in preparation for the winter, but ongoing washing is crucial. The dust from the gravel roads and local fields accumulates quickly on the outside, while my dog constantly leaves nose prints on the inside. While I might prefer otherwise, the windows require work if I am to have an unimpeded view of the world through them. I don’t need to enjoy the maintenance, but I do need to do it. Caring for the window of my soul requires an analogous set of actions as tending to my hermitage windows.

I would be a different person than I am today without both the specific difficulties and joys I’ve experienced. They have shaped my expectations and attitudes – the window through which I view myself, the world, and ultimately God. Unfortunately, the glass of this window is both damaged and often dirty, thus distorting the view I see through it.

Some of the damage in my soul’s window exists because over the years I have internalized others’ views. Sometimes what I internalized was accurate. For example, being repeatedly told as a child “you are not the center of the universe” taught me that everything is not always about me – which is true. Unfortunately, sometimes what I learned was not true – such as the belief that I’m responsible for making others happy. Believing such falsehoods has resulted in many small cracks in my soul’s window. Thankfully I can learn to compensate for their effect on my view – but only if I first accept that they are there. Cross-cultural work, friendships with others who have quite different perspectives from me, and seeking professional help on occasion have all helped me to see the broken pieces.

Because I want a clear view, washing the window also needs to happen, regardless of whether the glass is broken or not. The Church and life experience have taught me this work is done through intentional self-reflection. Life happens. I respond. Then, through my memories of the event, I tell myself a story about what happened. Because I’m human, I’m inclined to exaggerate things for effect, casting myself as



Photo: Daniel Olah

either the tragically misunderstood victim or the heroic protagonist. Left unchallenged, I come to believe my own P.R. I become convinced aspects of me are either far better or worse than they in fact are. I'm no longer simply kind and generous – but a saint. I'm not simply overindulgent, but an absolute slobby glutton. By routinely engaging in truthful self-reflection, I mitigate the effects these internal exaggerations have on my view of the Truth. I don't need to be bigger than life to matter. I don't need to be perfect. I do need to be honest.

None of this work is easy or comfortable, but I have learned it is simple and necessary if I want to see God as clearly as possible. It is embarrassing and humbling to see the chasm between His perfection and my humanity. But it is

comforting too – both because whether I am a great success or a failure in the eyes of the world it makes no significant difference to how far I am from holiness. And also because, by building my relationship with Him on this firm foundation, I am assured the storms of life will not cause it to topple.

DONNA ROYER



After decades of active ministry on behalf of, and within, the Church, Donna now lives a quieter, slower, life as an intentional contemplative Solitaire. She spends her days on her rural Interlake acreage reading, creating textile art, taking photos, and wandering in the woods.