



COURAGE

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CONNECTING CHURCH & COMMUNITY

Contributors

PUBLISHER

Bishop Naboth Manzongo

EDITOR

Cinna Baran

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Cinna Baran

ACCOUNTING

Joy Valencerina

COURAGE

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EDITORIAL OFFICES

Anglican Lutheran Centre
935 Nesbitt Bay
Winnipeg Manitoba, R3T 1W6

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.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please email the editor.

Cover: Photo by [Kiril Dobrev](#)



Everything finds its way back to love. The message at the heart of Jesus’ teachings, at the heart of the Christian faith, is love. Love is expressed and experienced in many ways. It is beautifully given, shared, and received.

As I write this, it is the feast of St. Maximilian Kolbe—a Franciscan friar and priest who volunteered to die in place of another in a concentration camp during the Second World War. I cannot fathom the fortitude, strength, and courage that it would take to willingly give up one’s life for someone else. Yet Kolbe’s story reminds us that courage is often born from love.

His example shows us that courage can take extraordinary forms, but it rarely comes out of nowhere. It is cultivated over time, through countless acts that may seem small or insignificant in the moment: being patient, asking for help—or giving it freely—and standing up for someone in need. It takes time and repetition to build courage. And because we rarely know the full extent of the effects of our actions, perhaps it is misleading to call these things “small.” When we act with courage, we act in faith, regardless of how great or insignificant our actions may appear to us.

This is also why courage can be shared. Acts of courage teach others; they lead by example. My boyfriend told me recently that he used to be terrified of roller coasters when he was a child. Despite his fear, his cousins were patient with him and slowly encouraged him to try larger, faster, and more intense rides. More importantly, they did not just encourage him with words; they went with him. They showed him that courage did not mean facing his fear alone.

There is something deeply Christian in this kind of courage. We are not all called to be the Maximilian Kolbes

of the world. Many of us will never face a moment that demands such extraordinary sacrifice. But we can all be the supportive friend or family member who walks alongside someone who needs us. We can be the person who offers encouragement, stays when things become difficult, or helps another person find the courage to take their next step. Whatever our particular calling, we must trust in God so that we may hear His call and walk forward in faith.

St. Paul writes a famous passage, 1 Corinthians 13:7, that is often recited at weddings as a testament to romantic love between two people. This is fitting and beautiful, yet I encourage you to view it from another perspective: “[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Sometimes our love bears the life of another, but more often it means walking with someone who needs us.

When we act in love, we may find that courage has been growing alongside it all along. When we put ourselves toward the things God has called us to, even the smallest acts can become seeds of something much greater. And when those seeds are nurtured by love, patience, and the support of others, they may blossom far beyond anything we could have imagined.

In this issue, with the 121st Session of Synod coming up, Deb Buxton explains a bit about why Synod is important and what its goals are. Next, Anil Pinto-Gfroerer reminds us to encounter the world with a childlike wonder rooted in love. Then, Obren Amiesimaka uses biblical examples to ready us and inspire our courage. Finally, Donna Royer tells us of “the Birds,” a group of people at her former parish who broadened her definition of courage from a young age.



CINNA BARAN

Editor of Rupert’s Land News



What is Synod and why are we gathering?

Deb Buxton

As you may have heard or read, the Diocese of Rupert's Land Synod will take place October 15–17 this year. Our Diocesan Synod is essentially the Annual General Meeting of the diocese. The Diocese of Rupert's Land constitution requires us to hold Synod every two years. This gathering is an important time to come together to discuss and plan key diocesan work.

During Synod, we will explore the issues and challenges facing our church and diocese, connect with Anglicans from parishes across the diocese, and discuss and decide what we plan to do together over the next two years. We will workshop, pray, laugh, and share meals together, trusting the Holy Spirit to work through each of us as we participate in this shared ministry.

Synod attendees include elected lay delegates from every parish and mission, as well as clergy, representatives from special interest groups, and diocesan staff. Together, they help guide and direct the diocese's work over the next two years.

The Diocese also invites willing lay and clergy delegates to take on additional responsibilities by serving on committees that support diocesan work between Synods, including Diocesan Council. These elected positions are filled by Synod delegates who have agreed to let their names stand.



Our theme is “**Team Rupert’s Land—Courage, Connection, and Change.**” Inspired by Ephesians 4:15—“Speaking the truth in love, growing together into Christ our head”—this verse offers hope, strength, and resilience to all who trust in God.

During our opening worship service, Bishop Naboth will offer “The Bishop’s Charge” for Synod. This official address opens the governing assembly of the Diocese of Rupert’s Land and reflects our Anglican identity as a church that is episcopally led and spiritually governed. The bishop’s sermon serves as a vital bridge between spiritual oversight and the democratic decision-making of clergy and lay delegates. The word “charge” reminds us that we are entrusted with spiritual responsibilities and ministries. It can also be understood as a call to be recharged—renewed, inspired, and motivated for the work of our diocese.

It is our hope that our time together at Synod will bring spiritual renewal as we face current challenges. Through prayer, worship, fellowship, discussion and studying God’s word, may we be led in our conversations and decisions.

Thank you to all delegates for your commitment and preparation. Please watch the guidance videos, connect with clergy and fellow delegates to review resolutions, and carefully study the Convening Circular—even if it feels overwhelming at first, proper preparation will ensure a rewarding Synod experience.

All the information and videos can be found on our [Diocesan website](#).

We ask for your continued prayers for the members of Synod, the Synod Agenda Committee, and more importantly, all of “Team Rupert’s Land.”



Many Synod delegates and clergy as they gathered in 2024

Photo: Cinna Baran



A Childlike Wonderment: The fodder of our courage

ANIL PINTO-GFROERER

All photos in this article are by Anil Pinto-Gfroerer

Two weeks ago, as I was walking through the woods along the high rapids of the Churchill River, I began a conversation with a dear friend. The topic of our conversation was adventure. We were in the middle of the woods, marvelling at the various berries on offer and the light cascading through the trees, and we began mulling over the ways in which the characters of the books we read as children were often unafraid of adventure and risk. We thought of Lucy venturing into Narnia and the Famous Five in Enid Blyton's *The Valley of Adventure* surviving off pineapple chunks and tinned milk—we marvelled at their inherent confidence and bravery.

In another conversation I had several weeks earlier, driving on the gravel roads back from Cumberland House, my parents talked about having a similar kind of confidence growing up in the 80s. I had been asking them what it was like for them growing up, and my dad said something along the lines of “we had a deep sense that the world was there for our exploration and enjoyment.”

But where did this confidence come from? How did the brash

characters of 1950s children's literature and the real youth of the 1980s move into adventure and risk with such ease? What was it that they had that we so sorely miss?

The answer may seem obvious—the stark reality of a “Super-sized” El Niño, the all too terrifying possibility that Europe could again be swept by fascist leaders, the spike in famine and drought, the catastrophic war occurring in the Middle East, the threat of civil conflict, the encroachment of artificial intelligence... The list continues. The state of current global affairs seems to reject any notion that things will be “ok.”

But what if the bravery of these children was not built on an understanding that everything would be ok (even these children were confronted with bleak realities); what if instead it was built on the belief and hope that there was something greater waiting for them in their adventure?

The hope we are given as Christians is not that things will remain the same. Our hope, grounded in the promise of the resurrection, is that things will be changed into their truer

form, a form which lives into the full Glory of being made and loved.

Becoming receptive to this form is not necessarily a comfortable activity. Recall St. Peter being told to go into deeper waters after a day of unsuccessful fishing. There is risk involved in releasing to receive what has been given. However, amidst this discomfort, we are repeatedly told not to fear. (Luke 5:1-11)

We are taught not to fear, not because there is nothing to be afraid of, but rather because there is a promise that is infinitely more wondrous than our reality. Recall again St. Peter returning with nets abundantly full.

Christ teaches us to become like little children (Matthew 18:3), and so perhaps there is a lesson to be learned from these adventurous youths. Perhaps, like them, we are meant to take on a courage that is not based on the world around us, but rather on the hope of what it could be—what it will be.

Courage is not dependent upon the current human condition; rather, it is dependent on the condition of the One



who comes, who is crucified, who is resurrected. Courage is not ours to generate; it is ours to receive.

But what do we do with this courage founded on hope? Are we allowed to act as we please, confident that regardless of the risks we take, we will be safe? No, safety is not what we are promised. The promise that we are given is that He has not and will not let go of us — that we are not abandoned. This divine bond, revealed in the Word made flesh, this Love which is imbued in all creation, is the something greater the adventurer is promised.

But how are we meant to live into this adventure? What does this mean for us as adults whose courage is sometimes hard to muster in a world such as this? [Rowan Williams](#) offers us instruction for how to take up the gift of courage. He writes: “We need to point to the God who does not let go, to the Christ who does not run away... by our faithfulness to the lost, the suffering, and the marginal, we begin to show what it is to have faith in the one who doesn't let go.”







Understood in this way, courage is the “simple” act of living as if we are loved, and of encountering the world and its suffering as if it, too, is loved. When we take action for the lost, the suffering, and the marginalized, in our lives and in ourselves, we participate in the revelation of a self-revealing God.

This activity of revelation in community is frightening and tiring because in it we continuously confront a society that does not operate as if each of its members is loved; because this idea is, in many ways, counter-cultural in a world filled with division. However, it is the great adventure we are set on, and what a glorious adventure this continual revelation of Love is. If we stay with the world, imperfectly mimicking the One who does not let go, our eyes are opened to the incomparable gift of His presence within it. Although we have much to be afraid of, the abundance of the Love which is demands our exploration and delight. As co-heirs with Christ, we are given the ability to venture into deeper waters knowing that our nets will be filled near bursting with His Glory.

C.S. Lewis recounts Lucy hearing the name of Love (Aslan) for the first time: “[She] got the feeling you have when you

wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer.”

And so, even as summer draws to a close and the leaves become burnished, let us enter into the revelation of Love as a little one newly awakened in wonder, full of endless curiosity of what the world will be.



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.



Be Strong and of Good Courage

Obren Amiesimaka

Photo: Janos Lenquel

Since I started writing this article, the 1937 anthem by Sir Henry Walford Davies, “Confortare,” has kept ringing in my ears. Sir Henry composed it for the coronation of King George VI, and I encountered it when the arrangement by Sir John Rutter was so beautifully performed at the coronation of King Charles III in 2023.

Some may be familiar with the Latin dictum and motto *confortare esto vir*, translated variously as “be strong and courageous” or “take courage and be a man,” amongst others. Looking at the lyrics, the reason for the name becomes apparent:

“Be strong, and show thy worth:
keep the commandments of the Lord thy God,
and walk in His ways.”

Although short, this baritone and choral anthem is quite powerful both in its meaning and delivery (I recommend the reader listen to it [performed](#)).

The lyrics derive from David’s charge to Solomon in his last

moments, recorded in 1 Kings 2:2 – 3: “I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. *Take courage* and be a man. Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all His ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go.”

At the hour of death, David’s prime advice to his son and successor was to “take courage,” to “be strong.” After being on the throne for forty years, King David underlines the importance of courage for Solomon to be successful in guiding, leading, and serving his people. Instructive as this is on its own, David places this charge within an exhortation to Solomon to keep God’s commandments and stay on the path of righteousness. This emphasises that Solomon’s courage should be undergirded by his faith and trust in God.

This is the recurrent theme whenever courage appears in the Bible.

The story of Esther, Queen of Persia and Media, is one of bravery and courage. When her people faced annihilation,

her cousin, Mordecai, asked her to appeal to the king, her husband, to save them. At first, she demurred in fear for her life, saying: “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king.” (Esther 4:11)

Mordecai then admonished her thus: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13b – 14)

Hearing this, Esther took courage and devised her plan to save her people. But first, she sought the Lord trusting that His will would prevail. She asked that all her people fast for her, as she and her household also observed the three-day fast. She did this not knowing what the outcome of her gamble with her life would be, but she uttered that most courageous of statements: “I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. *And if I perish, I perish.*” (Esther 4:16b)

Acts of courage or bravery are often associated with the threat of danger, and no danger is greater than the risk of losing one’s life. However, Esther found the courage to do what was right, notwithstanding the risk, and as the story goes on to tell us in further chapters, she and her people were saved. Courage often is standing for what is just, especially when the outcome is not guaranteed and the odds do not appear to be in one’s favour.

Where fear says, “Protect yourself at all costs,” courage says, “Do what is needed.”

Of course, one need not be facing grave danger to be courageous. We can also be brave in doing the less grand things. It can be as simple as telling our friends or loved ones the difficult truth they may not wish to hear, speaking up for someone who is being oppressed, or even having the courage to acknowledge a painful reality within ourselves that we would rather avoid. Courage can be shown in many situations.

Christ tells us in John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” Building on this, St. Paul exhorts the church: “Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13) St. Paul writes because he knows that there will be moments of trial and rough seas, but he also knows that if we are brave enough to stand firm in faith on the Solid Rock, we will prevail. This message, although enduring for all ages, was particularly important for the



Photo: Samuel Regan-Asante

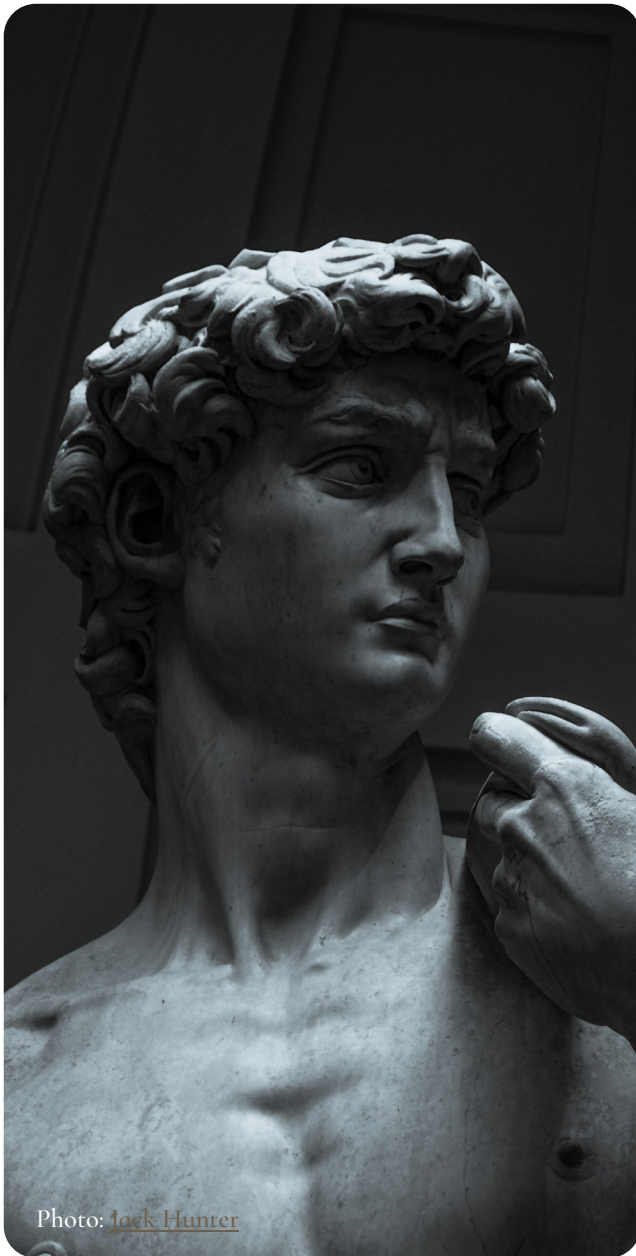


Photo: [Jack Hunter](#)

early church seeing as so many were martyred for their faith. Millennia later, their courage through Christ has brought the Good News to all the world. “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

The word courage elicits the image of valiant knights charging into battle despite knowing that their lives are in mortal danger. However, to be brave is not to be foolhardy and run towards danger without prior preparation. After all, military campaigns are typically pursued by all sides with intentional strategy and purpose.

So, how then do we ready ourselves to act in courage?

Ephesians 6:10-11a and 13b-18a outlines how we might be strong through being kitted in the Armour of God: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, ... so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

Truth. Righteousness. The Gospel. Faith. Salvation. The Spirit—The Word. These, coupled with prayer, set us up to live with divine courage.

Beloved in Christ, let us set aside all fear and go out daily, walking boldly in bravery and courage, secure in the knowledge that “... we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:37b–39)



OBREN AMIESIMAKA

Dr. Amiesimaka declares that he is no theologian, but a lowly follower of Christ, striving to see Him more clearly, love Him more dearly, and follow Him more nearly, day by day.

Obren lives trusting in God’s mercies and salvation bearing in mind Romans 3:23: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Dispatches from the Hermitage:

Quiet Courage



DONNA ROYER

Photo: [Dim Gunger](#)

In a former parish there was a long pew, about two-thirds of the way back from the altar, which was full each Sunday. A small group of regulars, who I thought of as ‘The Birds’, along with a changing assortment of others, would sit lined up as if on a wire. The inviting smiles, the kind inquiry about your week, and the unpretentious but devout worship drew others to these regulars, even when other pews had space. The friendship between them was obvious in their talk of intermingled lives. While not a Bird myself, I was blessed to call them friends. Witnessing their lives expanded my understanding of courage.

Well before meeting the Birds, as a child, I had a very narrow definition of courage—firefighters, police officers, and lifeguards—people who rescued others in danger. My understanding broadened as I came to learn the cost of speaking out against power and standing firm in my moral convictions. Still later, when my own marriage ended, I learned that some days it was an act of courage simply to get out of bed and face the demands of the world.

The Birds first came into my life when I worked in the office of the church we all worshipped at. One regularly drove to the church midweek to fold hundreds of pages into the weekly bulletins distributed on Sundays. We’d chat and share

the highlights of our week and plans for the coming days. One week another of the Birds invited me to her home for a visit. We spent time laughing over her photos of a giraffe sticking its head into the car through the open window and trying to eat the hat off her husband’s head. As the conversation moved on, I noticed a chair in the corner of the dining room, stacked with several rubber-banded hymnals peeking out from under some placements set atop them. Puzzled, I inquired about the books. She told me that she and her husband brought damaged books home with them after worship services, glued and repaired them, then replaced them in the pews at the church. I’d never considered what happened to the worn books before. A few years later they made the drive from the city to my parent’s hometown almost an hour away to support me at my dad’s funeral.

Over the years, as the Birds faced the changes life inevitably brings, I consistently encountered people counting their blessings and quietly doing what they could when they saw things that needed doing. Bulletins, abandoned in pews after services, would be collected and put into the recycling bin. Those struggling nearby during worship would unobtrusively have the hymnal in their hands replaced with one opened to the correct page. Without fanfare they gave service in the name of Christ. It was different from my approach.



Photo: A. C.

When my faith had first been awakened, I had feared that ‘take up your cross and follow me’ was a command requiring the heroic sacrifice of all that made life easier. Solidarity with the disenfranchised, in my mind, meant renouncing the comforts of my middle-class life and joining them in the precariousness of their situations. The Birds provided a gentle antidote to my earnestness. They showed me that living a life of faithfulness would require as much courage as attempting to live an extraordinary life. That realization changed how I led my life.

At first it was a relief to realize I didn’t need to excel beyond others in achievement or expertise. I thought it would be easier to repeatedly take the next step. However, committing to this journey of formation and allowing myself to be changed has required more than I ever imagined.

I quickly discovered sheer willpower was insufficient—especially when I need to forgive another. At one point I joined the staff of a small drop-in support agency to help expand their programming. For several weeks I endured snide comments, my work being undermined in conversations, and

the repeated, mysterious disappearance of needed papers. I was frustrated and hurt by both my coworker’s behavior and the board’s insistence it was our issue to resolve. I felt forced to resign. Forgiving those involved did not come naturally or easily—I felt betrayed and resented the fact I would need to start at another position. While I knew I should forgive, I refused to for several weeks. Eventually, with God’s help, I was able to take the step. It seems the true test of faithfulness is whether I’ll accept God’s help, get up, repent, and try again.

Faithfulness has also meant accepting, as gracefully as possible, decisions that aren’t mine to make. It has meant trusting family members with their own faith decisions and accepting we must each walk our own paths. While I might wish their decisions were otherwise, I’m thankful we are able to continue to be family to one another—loving each other while acknowledging and respecting our differences. Occasionally faithfulness has required the courage to accept that some relationships break—a desire to remain friends or partners does not trump another’s wish to end things. What I can choose is to continue to love and pray for them. Love

triumphs, but at the cost of a new weight in my heart.

The Birds modeled that following Christ faithfully often involves living into the uncertainty of what the future holds.

I witnessed it as health changed, deaths occurred, and homes were downsized. In my own life, the ending of my marriage, leaving jobs, and moving across the country several times have all required embracing uncertainty and saying yes to a future different from the one I'd imagined. Sometimes that stepping forth has been accompanied by excitement, but more often it is fear which predominates my emotions.



Photo: Kelly Sikkema

Some days, even uttering a prayer to the Creator and Sustainer of All, or trusting his promise that death isn't the end of our story, seems to require all the courage I can muster.

The years have shown me the wisdom of the path the Birds introduced me to—a quiet courage, a faithfulness of life. I haven't worshipped in the same parish as them for several years. Some have died. I am not certain if many continue to flock to sit together in that pew like birds on a wire. What I am certain of is that the remaining Birds continue to live lives of quiet faithfulness. I heard that one of them, having inherited furniture she had no need for, was planning to give it to a refugee family who could use it. God's message of love continues to spread through their courageous witness. I pray the same may be said of each of us.



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.