

# From Fragility to the Prophetic Breath

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Epiphany is approaching as this introduction is being written, so the image of guiding star arises. One could say that the guiding star for these articles was CRC's General Assembly 2018 as well as further reflection of the Theological Commission on the presentations and conversations of the Assembly.

Elena Lasida, assembly keynote presenter, summarized the guiding principles of *Laudato Si'* as: *everything is connected, everything is given and everything is fragile*. Our reflection as a commission moved us to focus on the fragility and limits we experience in our congregations and church today, and the possibilities for new life when faced with these challenges.

## Reclaiming Our Charism

In "Charism: A Powerful and Fragile Breath," **Gaétane Guillemette** asks if we may have diluted our understanding of charism by equating it with our congregation's particular expression of spirituality, or the characteristic ministries of our congregations. Could reclaiming our charism as an experience of the Spirit, ever fresh, ongoing and revitalizing, give greater cohesion to our religious life, and strengthen its prophetic stance in our time?

## Biblical Insights

Our biblical scholars chose to reflect on stories from scripture to shed light on the experience of limits and fragility. **Yvan Mathieu** probes the spiritual journey of the prophet Elijah in Kings 1, and sees significant parallels with our current experience in religious life. **Michel Proulx** reflects on the Babylonian exile as a time of great fragility and testing of limits for the people of the Covenant, who move through discouragement to find creative ways to remain faithful to their God and celebrate their faith.

## Breaking the Bread for Others

In "With Christ, Becoming Eucharist," **Nathalie Roberge** reminds us of Pope Francis' call to revisit the Paschal mystery of Christ, who, in his moment of ultimate suffering, was creative and loving to the end. At the heart of our own reality, we live our unique paschal journey to become Eucharist ourselves, to break bread for those around us, and for the world.

## Foundation of True Authority

As we experience fragility and limits within our Church regarding abuse of power and authority, **Gill Goulding** offers a theological reflection on the foundation and exercise of authority, that invites us to examine the understanding and exercise of authority and power within our congregations.

## Inspiring Stories

Our last three articles are stories from the scriptures of life, stories of creative response to challenges. In "Marthas' Garden, an Experience in Integral Ecology," **Lorraine d'Entremont** tells the story of the 'New Growers', an agricultural project of the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish, NS, and the congregational journey toward integral ecology that led to the project. In her article, **Patricia Brady** describes the evolving relationship between the Benedictines of Nanaimo, BC, and their Oblates as a passing on of the spirit

of Saint Benedict, and creative of new life. **Celia Chua** finds hope and an invitation ‘to go beyond and leave behind ...mental and spiritual limitations,’ in her congregations’ missionary experience in China.

We hope our offerings will be glimmers of light in your night sky, inviting you to shine your own small or great star, so that the brighter light of Christ may illumine the world with hope.