

# THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK 2010

## Sunday December 26, 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak to one another..." Let us, then, be up and doing, with a heart for any fate still achieving, still pursuing, learning to labour and to wait.

- H.W. Longfellow

"The more value I find in life, the more value I myself have."

- Nikos Kazantzakis

At the end of a year, we might remember - "All the best work is done the way ants do things - by tiny but untiring and regular additions."

- Laccadio Hearn

Spititus intus alit: The spirit within nourishes.

- Virgil

"Call the world, if you please - 'the vale of soul-making.'"

- John Keats

"In my life, anxiety, troubles, and sorrow have been allotted to me...Heavy is the burden of fatigue and responsibility...But I have had blessings too: that I am allowed to work...that I have received from other people affection and kindness...that I have loyal helpers; that I enjoy health, and that I have an energy which flows with calmness and deliberation; and that I recognize whatever happiness falls to my lot, and accepting it, it becomes a thing for which some thank offering is due."

- Albert Schweitzer

## Sunday December 25, 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

Here, we advocate a New Faith. It points to life freed from so much negativity, freed from beliefs that can be left behind. The New Faith brings the energy of an enriched life, a celebration of life, and a determination to uphold the dignity of every person and to bring a new ethic to the political and interpersonal conversation.

"Consider the mystery of the greatest joy and the strength of the best care. And consider the source of all these gifts - the God we try to know, but will never really know."

Get hold of every instrument you can find. Bring them all to life - so that they will be one massive and marvelous sound, to say, YES 'to the God beyond us.'

- (Psalm 150)

"Life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be lived."

- Joseph Campbell

"When people say they're looking for the meaning of life, what they are really looking for is a deep experience of it."

- Joseph Campbell

Christmas gives us that awesome awareness that the gift of Life is given then gone - and "prompts us to live passionately and intentionally and not waste the gift we were given."

- Richard Holloway

## Sunday December 19, 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

St Michael's invites people to be parts of the celebration of a New Faith -

Searching for the ways that Faith contributes to our health and well-being;

Searching for the ways that Faith becomes the energy of life;

Searching for the ways that theology and psychology can enhance Faith, health, well-being and life.

Each one of us an internal, mental world. We can develop insight and mid sight. This helps us perceive our own mind with greater clarity than ever before. Good mind sight means that we are totally in focus.

-Daniel Siegel

ARALSK, Kazakhstan, is surrounded by barren desert. A billboard proclaims - "Good News. The Sea is Coming Back".

Imagine that the task of everyone is to deepen the mystery of himself or herself. Everywhere you go there is a secret room. You must find yours.

Sometimes I go in pity for myself and all the while, great wind is bearing me across the sky.

- Ojiwa: Asoyia

May the stars light your way and may you find the interior road.

- An Irish Traditional Blessing

Religion is more than a set of rules. It is more the search for the good society. It depends on the sense that there is a mystery about the world that we never quite unravel - that humans can imaginatively approach this mystery.

- Mary Warnock

## Sunday December 12, 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

Imagination: The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge - but imagination.  
- Albert Einstein

"I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them."  
- Pablo Picasso

"Imagination and fiction make up more than three quarters of our real life."  
- Simon Weil

"They are ill discoverers that think there is no land, when they can see nothing but sea."  
- Francis Bacon

"Imagination is the door to amazement. Religion, science and ethics are all journeys of the human imagination. The spiritual or mystical imagination, the scientific imagination and the moral imagination are all linked."  
- Margaret Somerville - "The Ethical Imagination."

"The proneness of human beings to Great objects as symbolic is a chief functions of imagination" "The symbol is both itself, and what it stands for."  
- Mary Warnock - "Dishonest to God"

## Sunday December 5, 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

What a difference it would make! Imagine - if EVERYBODY used their imagination in an expansive, generous way. It would make a difference.

"All the works of 'man' have their origin in creative fantasy. What right have we to depreciate imagination?" - C G Jung.

Of course, imagination can run-off in disturbing and destructive directions. That expression of imagination needs to be regulated by constant reference to reality and those resources that feed a positive imagination.

"Illuminated by the imagination, our life - whatever its defeats and despairs - is a never-ending...adventure and mystery." - Walter de la Mare.

Some people look into the future and imagine things dreadful. Some people look into this future and imagine and plan the possible.

Imagination is an active part of our everyday. Is it a friend, or is it an enemy? Is it a whirlwind into unreality, or is it a facilitator of a new reality?

Is your religion little more than imaginings of people's minds - or is it part of enriching people's minds?

## Sunday November 28 2010- Dr Francis Macnab

We become agents of change in our part of the world as we show our life-affirming attitudes, our vigorous belonging to groups that show the energy of a renewed and renewing faith, our awareness of beauty, our fullest celebration of the Spirit of Life.

Good enriching environments and strong human stimulation provoke growth in the brain. "The idea that the brain is like a muscle that grows with exercise is not just a metaphor".

- Norman Doidge.

We believe in the process of healing, of drawing together, and of building together on common strengths.

- Michael Hazeltine.

The brain can be modified.

- Norman Doidge.

Compassion is the knowing pursuit of Kindness. Everything that we know can be put in the service of trying to be kind - and that requires all sorts of knowing, from detailed practical knowledge about the world to the deeper and most detailed practical knowledge of the human heart.

- R. A. Lewin

Opportunities are rare - like butterflies. You stretch your hand out and they are gone.

- Ian McEwan

"When you don't need the strength to fight for your life, you not only find you don't have it anymore, you can't imagine having it."

- Wilfrid Sheed

## Sunday November 21 2010- Dr Francis Macnab

How to live - someone asked me in a letter,  
Someone I had wanted  
to ask the same thing

- W. Szybroska

There is something about human consciousness that has the capacity to transform pain into wisdom...We may end up with a paradox - the realization that by accepting our vulnerability, we can become more than we ever dreamed possible.

- Rachel Naomi Remen

The great doord sighs. It opens and a child  
enters the church and kneels in the front pew.

The Maker of the Universe has smiled

He made the church for this one interview.

- Daniel Sargent

Each one of us, after years of fretting,  
That there is no answer  
May come to our old age  
A country so new to us  
And become its latest migrants.

"To function as a new person and to develop a new and different life, we must find ways to re-center ourselves, and the energy to refocus our life. Centering and re-focusing is vital in looking to the future."  
- Catherine Sanders

While there are many pathways to experiencing God or the Self, praying with an open heart is one of the most powerful and joyful.  
- Dean Ornish

"Difficult times pull us inward and urge us to search for our connection to a higher power."  
- Catherine Sanders

## **Sunday November 14 2010- Dr Francis Macnab**

Thanksgiving. Yes.

For the good experiences of our life;  
For effectively finding our way to this point in time;  
For stories, imagination, moments of wonder, and for good people;  
For colors in the sky, the paintings, the tapestries;  
For inspiration, encouragement and laughter;  
For songs of the heart, music of the soul;  
For this place and what it gives to us.  
Yes: and this is a Day of Thanksgiving.

### **A Friendship Blessing**

May you be blessed with good friends.  
May you learn to be a good friend to your self.  
May you be able to journey to that place in your soul where there is great love, warmth, feeling and forgiveness.  
May this change you.  
May it transfigure that which is negative, distant or cold in you.  
May you be brought in to the real passion, kinship and affinity of belonging.  
May you treasure your friends.  
May you be good to them and may you be there for them; may they bring you all the blessings, challenges, truth and light that you need for your journey.  
-John O'Donohue

## Sunday November 7 2010- Dr Francis Macnab

Where are the songs of Spring? Aye, where are they?  
-John Keats

My life is but the life of winds and tides  
No more than winds and tides can I avail: -  
But thought canst...  
I will keep watch on thy bright sun,  
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.  
-John Keats

The imagination of a boy is healthy  
And the mature imagination of a man is healthy;  
But there is a space of life between  
In which the soul is in ferment  
The character undecided,  
The way of life uncertain...  
-John Keats

But when melancholy fit shall fall  
Sudden from heaven like a creeping cloud,  
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,  
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;  
Then glut thy sorrows on a morning rose,  
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave.  
-John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains my sense as though of hemlock I had  
drunk.  
-John Keats

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness, but still will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.  
-John Keats

"Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art."

## Sunday October 31 2010- Dr Francis Macnab

"Awe and the sense of the sacred are often dismissed as irrelevant to us and our kind of world. Yet some would say awe is the most "spiritual" of the positive emotions. "

-George Valliant

"The human capacity for positive emotions is what makes us spiritual".

"Mr Enzenberger, why are you not unhappy?"

A: "The time I have left is too precious for that"

Talking of minds often and closed- look at science "like any other human affair, it is shot through with prejudice and partisanship, not to speak of ungrounded assumptions, unconscious biases, taken-for-granted truths... like religion, science is a culture, not just a set of procedures and hypotheses."

- Terry Eagleton

"It was the love that swallows up all else, a grateful love, love of nature, of people, animals, a love endangering gentleness and goodness that moves me."

-W.C Williams

"There comes a moment when you are aware that you are about to step out of light into darkness, out of knowing into unknowing, without guarantee of return. It is a moment of clearness and stillness, in which you know, with strange certainty, that whatever is waiting to receive you is good, beneficent, loving. You are aware that you have been prepared for this moment... by the gift of life itself."

-Morris West

## Sunday October 24 2010- Dr Francis Macnab

We are thrown into the world. Our life consists of constant attempts to find out who we are; to find out what is new against us; and in face of all that we find, reach out to the best we can possibly be.

-Estrangement and Relationships; Francis Macnab

"Here is your task: to create unity out of all duality; to establish unity in the world...unity that is a fulfilled unity out of tensions and strain...you must descend ever anew, into the transforming abyss, risk your soul ever anew, ever anew vowed to the holy insecurity.

-Martin Buber

"It has become more and more difficult for 'man' to believe that at some point in the future an act from "ABOVE" will redeem the human world - and transform it from a senseless one into one full of meaning, from disharmony into harmony."

"The basic doctrine of the Hebrew Bible is that life is a dialogue. We are to enter into this dialogue with our whole being and it must be a relationship which shapes the whole order of life."

-Martin Buber - The Life of Dialogue

"Friendship exists in all the world's cultures, likely as a result of natural selection. People have always needed allies to help out in times of trouble, raise their status, and join them against their enemies"

"The real reason to prize our friends is that they let us lead good and satisfying lives, enriched by mutual understanding."

-Daniel Akst

"The hunger for others - the need to be needed, the need to be admired, to be ourselves the object of others' longing, to dominate - drives ambition, the relentless pursuit of self-aggrandizement through possessions, office and accolade,...standing, esteem, power,...it energizes the lives of those who have done most to shape our world for good and ill - It is a hunger from which no one escapes."

-Raymond Tallis

## **Sunday October 17 2010- Dr Francis Macnab**

We know that our distressing events, our past traumas, become embedded in our memory. Our mind then plays a crucial part in whether that pain in our memory will continue to be painful, or whether it will respond to some healing process.

The mind is very powerful yet we know so little about how it becomes damaged, and how it can be healed.

Physical activity changes the activity of the mind. Unstimulating environments, boring events (and people) must contribute to brain atrophy and to a dulling of the mind.

On the other hand, the passion of wonder makes a huge impact on our mind, on our appreciation of the healing of life's pains. Wonder is deeply interwoven into science- as into some religious experiences. Wonder is aroused in that moment of awareness and discovery, or in the results of the discovery and its significance.

"So it's the laughter we will remember whenever we remember the way we were"  
- Barbara Streisand in her song 'The way we were'.

"Is it possible that love, hope, faith, laughter, confidence and the will to live have a therapeutic power in the human mind?"

-Norman Cousins.

"When the mind works well, when our brain functions as an integrated whole, our relationships thrive. But sometimes we 'lose our minds' and act in ways we do not choose."

- Daniel Siegel

"There is an internal reality at the heart of our lives"

-Daniel Siegel

Sunday 10th October 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

The human brain gets set in its ways- the way it sees the world, the way it thinks, the way it develops who we are, but the human brain can change. What happens to our perceptions, our thinking, our interpretation of events, our self-image, when the brain changes?

"I saw people rewire their brains..."  
"...the most important alteration of the brain.."

"The scientists who make important discoveries about the brain are often those whose brains are extraordinary, working on those whose brains are damaged."

- Norman Doidge

"I am telling you how I see it all now, but it was all different then"

-Doris Lessing: The Cleft

"Much to cast down, much to build, much to restore. Let the work delay, time and the arm not waste."

-William Shakespeare- All's well that ends well.

"The web of our life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together."

-William Shakespeare- All's well that ends well.

Socrates said that good life is a balance of the good, the true and the beautiful.

"Ordinarily the adult is slow to change their beliefs about themselves and the way they see their world. Even though they are under severe stress, and changing their beliefs could bring considerable relief. As a person matures, they may realise that certain longstanding beliefs are not only maladaptive but also false."

- Joseph Weiss

## **Sunday 3rd October 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"The empires of the future are the empires of the mind."

Winston Churchill

"I am astonished at how much of an older person's healthy ageing or lack of it is predicted by factors already established before age 50."

George Vaillant

The human mind is constantly affected by its environments - relationships, the stresses in modern society, workplace conflicts and satisfactions, anxiety and safety regarding the future.

These days - we recognize more than at any other time, how life events become mind-spots, memory overloads affecting the quiescence of the mind for years. How quickly will we recover; what of human resilience? And what are the processes of restoration?

The world health organization estimates that mental health problems in children will rise by 50% in the year 2020. It will become one of the five major causes of childhood illness, disability and death.

## **Sunday 26th September 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab St Michael's Day**

"We now stand at a turning point in the history of the biosphere. It looks as if 'man' will not be able to save 'himself' from the nemesis of 'his' demonic material power and greed unless 'he' allows 'himself' to undergo a change of heart."

Arnold Toynbee, 1976, British historian

"We are the new generation of explorers, of our human mind, imagination and spirit. The challenge for all of us is to create structures with which we can personally identify and in which we can feel we belong, and yet which allow us to recognise ourselves and all others as part of one human family."

Margaret Somerville, Professor of Law and Medicine, Canada.

"I was always bewitched by three of God's creatures- the worm that becomes a butterfly, the flying fish that leaps out of the water in an effort to transcend its nature, and the silkworm that turns its entrails into silk. I always felt a mystical unity with them, for I always imagined them as symbols symbolising the route of my soul."

Nikos Kazantzakis, Author of 'Report to Greco'

"Let us accept... the responsibility now laid upon us all for the future of our species and for the protection of all planetary life.

Sir Lloyd Geering

"As we live, we are transmitters of life. And when we fail to transmit life, life fails to flow through us."

D.H Lawrence

"With the human population continuing to rise by 75 MILLION a year, and with torrid economic growth in much of the developing world, the burdens of deforestation, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, species extinction, ocean acidification, and other massive threats, intensify."

Jeffery Sachs, director of the Earth Institute, Columbia University, U.S.A.

## **Sunday 19th September 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

Open the gates,  
Weed the paths,  
Let the wind blow.  
Break down the barricades  
Of prejudice and pride,  
Demolish our desires  
And let the wind blow  
Let the wind blow

Softly on those who suffer,  
That, when the wand'ring spirit stills  
The body's torment, then  
Will dawn  
A firmer faith, a deeper love,  
And healing balm.  
-Iona Bevan

"I have learned To look on nature, not as in the hour Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity, Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power To chasten and subdue. And I have felt A presence that disturbs me with the joy Of elevated thoughts..."  
-William Wordsworth

Everything in the world was really beautiful -  
Everything but our own thoughts and actions  
When we lose sight of the higher aims of existence  
And our dignity as human beings.  
-Anton Chekhov

The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.  
-G.W.F. Hegel

## **Sunday 12th September 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

A Gift for yourself and the kids -  
A good sense of self.  
A sense of who I am - and who they are:  
What is possible for them to be:  
What will make a difference to what we will all contribute to our life, and the life of others.  
Everyone has two journeys to make through life.

There is the other journey, with its various incidents and milestones. There is also an inner journey, a spiritual Odyssey, with a secret history of its own.  
-Dean William Inge

The living self has one purpose only: to come into its own fullness of being, as a tree comes into full blossom, or a bird into spring beauty..."  
-O.H. Lawrence

"Blessed are those who heal us of our self-despising. Of all services which one can do to another. I know of none more precious."  
-William Hale White

At what point in time do you say -  
"Well that's who I am! There's nothing more than that!"  
And then you stumble on something - a new idea, a new experience, a new creative

experience.

Julia Cameron said - "I think that creativity is contagious and the best thing we can do for children is to model for them what it's like to be a creative individual."

Many older people have hungry and empty hearts that did not learn when young to hope and love.

-George Vaillant

## **Sunday 5th September 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"The earth is our brief home, let's put the house in order" - Ben Okri

"We carry with us, across the silver river of the new age, many ambiguous and deadly seeds, And many seeds of illumination too" - Ben Okri

They said, "You have a blue guitar, you do not play things as they are."

The man replied, "Things as they are

Are changed upon the blue guitar." - Wallace Stevens

"The living self has one purpose only; to come into its own fullness of being". - D.H Lawrence

"No one remains quite what they were when they recognise themselves". -Joseph Conrad (Joseph and his brothers)

## **Sunday 29th August 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

Spirituality is a reality deeply interwoven with positive human emotions.

"Spiritual Evolution builds on the relatively new scientific disciplines of ethology (animal behavior) and neuroscience - both of which have enabled the scientific study of positive emotions such as love, joy, awe, and compassion."

-George Vaillant

An evolution has taken place from the base human interactions to a fuller embrace of the best human emotions.

"Often the most broken individuals...become the most spiritual."

-George Vaillant

Your intelligence is always with you,...even though you may not be aware of its work.

-Rumi

"The rituals and cultural formats of the world's great religions form the surest way to pull our positive emotions into conscious reflection.

...Neuroscience, like cultural anthropology, has affirmed the relevance of religions ritual to connect with the limbic world of emotion"

-George Vaillant

"Religions beliefs and preaches have been tied to decreased levels of anxiety and depression, and to increased levels of happiness, life satisfaction and well-being."  
-Xavid Rosmarin

"To reckon with the world as it is, we need religious literacy."  
-Stephen Prothero

"Greater times are yet to be born. In the midst of the low tide of things, when all seems bleak, a gentle voice whispers in the air that the spirits of creativity wander the land..."  
-Ben Okri

## Sunday 22nd August 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

If you were asked to invent your own religion, what would it be like? The only conditions are

(a)it has to be relevant to your life, and it has to

(b)Be interestingly relevant to others.

What are the "essentials" of your life to which your religion would have to be relevant.

-Stephen Prothero

"The glory of God is a human being fully alive."  
-Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (2ndC.A.D)

"I yearn to be part of a newly understood Christian Church, one that is not dedicated to the maintenance of its institutional power, but rather one that will both assist people into life and one that lobby in word and deed for the removal of any barricades that impede anyone's humanity."

-J. Shelby Spong

We can see that the Christian Church has become so splintered, that its utterances regarding beliefs are frequently too confusing, that its attempts to understand humanity and its various conditions often miss the mark. Is it any wonder that it is regarded as irrelevant?

So - as you look deeply into yourself - how can your religion find such essential meaning, and such vital energy, that it will become one of your intelligent priorities in life?

"Sometimes in a vision, I see a world of happy human beings, all vigorous, all intelligent, none of them oppressing, none of them oppressed. ...If such a world...does come to exist - we shall have a world very much more glorious, very much more splendid, more happy, more full of imagination and of happy emotions than any world that the world have ever known before."

-Bertrand Russell

## Sunday 15th August 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"Something is profoundly wrong with the way we live today"  
...We cannot go on living like this.  
And yet we seem unable to conceive of alternatives

...Today here has been a partial awakening.  
- Tony Judd (Ill Fares the Land)

"The world's religions of promise the magic of metamorphosis, but what is on offer is often less dramatic than spinning golden gods out of human straw."  
-Stephen Prothero (God is not One)

Religion has become dull and insipid. We need a 'depth theology' to recover the original awe and mystery and wonder.  
-Karen Armstrong (A History of God)

"Religion is now back on the agenda....we have become aware of just how powerful a role religion plays in ethnic and social identity."  
-Steve Bruce (Politics and Religion)

"We now stand at a turning-point in the history of the biosphere. It looks as if man will not be able to save himself from the nemesis of his demonic material power and greed unless he allows himself to undergo a change of heart."  
-Arnold Toynbee (Mankind and Mother Earth)

"It is only when religion emphasizes its heart and soul and essence...that religion can offer something for which modernity has desperate need: a genuine respectable injunction to bring forth the spiritual domain."  
-Ken Wilber (The Marriage of Sense and Soul)

## Sunday 8th August 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

In several countries, today is observed as Hiroshima Peace Day.

It has long been an accepted view that wars are part of the human scene. This view can be effectively rejected.

It has long been an accepted view that aggression and hostility are in built in the human being and human communities. They are easily identified, often encouraged and widely reinforced in human behavior.

But aggression and hostility can be controlled, and can be effectively eliminated as unacceptable behavior. In the long run, it may be the test of whether the human species can survive.

Some believe that in the interests of defence and security the intelligent thing is to have sufficient arsenals to blow the world to pieces. But is this so intelligent?

What then of an intelligent religion? Will we wage wars believing God is on our side, when we can never understand what God wants - except perhaps, God would be in favour of people living together in harmony.

But what kind of religion is now an intelligent religion?

"Tensions among Jews, Christians and Muslims (some of them) imperil the world's order...Three great religions of salvation have helped put the world in need of salvation."

William James (1901) wrote -

Religious belief contains the "belief that there is an unseen order, and our supreme good lies in adjusting ourselves thereto." Our supreme good is surely our survival as a human species, our highest health and our full and flourishing existence.

Robert Wright: The Evolution of God

The Global Peace Index 2010 list the Ten Most Peaceful Countries:

New Zealand

Iceland

Japan

Austria

Norway

Ireland

Denmark

Luxembourg

Finland

Sweden

Note the countries not listed!

## **Sunday 1st August 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

### **AUGUST- THE MONTH OF AN INTELLIGENT RELIGION**

It is time for the bell to ring and the question to be asked - "What have intelligent people done about an intelligent religion?"

In the Book of Genesis, Eve was told she was forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge, ie;

"You can do anything in this magnificent garden, except become intelligent."

"How readily men construct fables in order to avoid looking reality in the face."

-Michael Onfray

The Ten Commandments include a simple unmistakable direction - "Thou shalt not kill" (Deuteronomy 5, 17). In chapter 7,1, God tells the Israelites to exterminate SEVEN different nations of people.

"Spurning compassion, he demands the demolition of their altars and monuments."  
- Michael Onfray

"Jesus utters the word LOVE only twice in the entire Gospel of Mark. So where did the doctrine called "Christian love" come from? In two of the gospels, Jesus says, 'Love your enemies'. Paul, however never utters such words."  
- Robert Wright

"Religion created gods because people could not find any other explanation to console them for the tragedy of life in this world."  
- Karen Armstrong

"All those years ago when my faith in an all-good and all-powerful God suddenly collapsed at university, I had yet to discover that best evidence of all for this non-existence: that bully churches survive and bigots flourish."  
-David Marr

When Christianity became swollen into an elaborate code of prescribed beliefs and ritual obligations policed by a hierarchy, the meaning of faith was warped almost beyond recognition."We are witnessing the emergence of a different vocabulary, one that is closer to the original sense of the word faith before its debasement"  
-Harvey Cox

## **Sunday 25th July 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

We all stand on the edge of life, each moment compromising that edge. Before us is only possibility."  
-Rollo May

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life in between, in which the soul is in ferment...the way of life uncertain.  
-John Keats

"I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference!"  
-Robert Frost

"The freedom of each of us is in proportion to the degree with which we confront and live in relation to our destiny."  
-Rollo May

"A man who has made a mistake and doesn't correct it is making another mistake."  
-Confucius

"Yet we have gone on living,  
Living and partly living."  
-T.S. Eliot

"The revolutionary idea that defines the boundary between modern times and the past is the mystery of risk: the notion that the future is more than a whim of the gods, and that men and women are not passive before nature."  
-Peter Bernstein

### **Sunday 18th July 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason."  
- Dag Hammarskjöld (Secretary-General, United Nations 1953-1961. Nobel Prize 1963.)

"A miracle -  
Second to none:  
Just this orchard  
From just that seed."  
- Wislawa Szymborska (Nobel Prize 1996)

"Human life begins at the far-side of despair"  
- Jean-Paul Sartre (French philosopher and novelist. Nobel Prize 1964.)

"Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind."  
- Bertrand Russell (Nobel Prize 1950)

"The world breaks everyone; and afterward many are strong at the broken places."  
- Ernest Hemingway (Nobel Prize 1954)

"Is there an answer to this question of why bad things happen to good people?"  
- Harold Kushner

### **Sunday 11th July 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"So we pray give us humility that we may remember that the work we do today, the work we do every day, is false and pretentious if it fails to serve those who day in and day out are your small gestures of beauty and tenderness."  
-Stanley Hanerwas

The human brain is not like that heart or the liver: it is your brain that gives you your sense of unique individuality."  
-Susan Greenfield

"The beauty of the soul shines out in one's intelligence, one's virtue, one's generosity..."

- Miguel de Cervantes

"The highest values of humanity reflect our human maturity and our spiritual evolution."

-George Valliant

## Sunday 4th July 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

We do know this: the human spirit has been greatly neglected. It is rarely if ever mentioned in medical and psychology text books. It is avoided by doctors and psychologists alike.

And yet - there is widespread talk of

"the strength of the human spirit"

"the resilience of the human spirit"

"a happy human spirit"

"an expansive human spirit"

When it is so important in everyone's everyday experience, why the professional evasion?

Why are we not studying how the courageous human spirit is of vital importance in times of stress and trauma. When we know how we can all lose touch with the inner spirit of joy and celebration, we don't learn how to recover that joy and celebration in the quickest possible time?

"How unspeakably poor a soul can be when it enters the mists and returns to nothing".

- Henrik Ibsen

"Deep-soul therapy requires learned listening".

Call the world, if you please

'The value of soul-making'

then you will find out

the use of the world.

- John Keats

"So we sit still and are quiet"

-Ainslie Meares

"Each of us needs to escape the incessant noise that surrounds us- everyday business, social chatter, mass media - to create the opening to connect with our inner wisdom"

-W.B Stewart (Renowned oculoplastic surgeon, Director of The Institute for Health and Healing)

## Sunday 27th June 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"Something has happened to me. It is as if my inner self, my soul, something inside me, has lost its zap. There is a kind of sadness or deadness there."

"I see some people. They have a good position in life. But they sound so un-alive."

"I have a black hole in my soul and I wish I could get rid of it."

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid some heart once pregnant with celestial fire.

- Thomas Gray

You need not see what someone is doing to know if it is his vocation, you have only to watch his eyes.

- W.H Auden

Theses stars are not wanted now;  
put out every one;  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;  
For nothing can ever come to any good.

- W.H Auden

Life is what we make it,  
Life is a buzz that we generate around ourselves..  
Life is the ceaseless whirling dance..T  
he miracle of life!  
It's self-healing  
Self-refreshing  
Self-renewal;  
Life! Life!

- Don Cupitt

## Sunday 20th June 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

God said, "Let there be light." And there was light; and God saw that the light was good.

-Genesis 1.3

In years to come, "astronomers may be able to observe directly how a dark featureless universe formed the brilliant panoply of objects that now give us light and life."

-Richard Larson: Scientific American

"Some 15 billion years ago the universe emerged from a hot, dense sea of matter and energy. As the cosmos expanded and cooled , it spawned galaxies, stars, planets, and life."

-James Peebles et al.

How did a hot amorphous fireball evolve into a complex cosmos? How did atoms assemble...into living beings intricate enough to ponder their own origins?  
-Martin Rees

Human beings will continue to search for the origins of the parts, but they will also continue to wonder how all the parts come together, and hold together - providing us with that vast scope for exploration, inspiration and delight.  
-F.A.M

A tapestry like this brings all the parts and pathways together. If I could sit quietly and stare at this tapestry, I would see that the parts of my life journey take on a wide range of colours - and through them all, I am able to see the illumination and inspiration bringing their enhancement and transformation.  
-F.A.M

William James, regarded as one of the greatest of the early psychologists, wrote -  
"The visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance; And our union or harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end."

When I look up to the stars I don't try counting, but I know that the lights I see can pass right through me.  
-Judith Wright

## **Sunday 13th June 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"Fear always remains. A man may destroy everything written himself, love and hate and belief, and even doubt; but as long as he clings to life he cannot destroy fear - that pervades his being, tinges his thoughts, lurks in his heart..."  
- Joseph Conrad

"I believe that man's growth is a process of continuous birth, of continuous awakening"  
- Erich Fromm

"Freedom has a twofold meaning for modern man: that he has been freed from traditional authorities and has become isolated, powerless ..alienated from himself and others; furthermore, this state undermines his self, weakens and frightens him and makes him ready for submission to new kinds of bondage"  
- Erich Fromm

Fear is a complex and multifaceted sensation. And so is your response to it:  
Some scream and shake and sweat  
Some get choked up in the throat or churned up in the stomach.  
Some faint and fall over and fear they are going crazy  
Your reactions TO fear may need more attention than the fear itself.

"Some people speak of 'facing their demons'. They speak about it, but they then act as if they wished to avoid -ever -facing their demons."  
- John Peteet

## Sunday 6th June 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"Often we are pushed to the limit, a point of last resort, and sometimes we go under. A collapse that lasts an hour, a week, months or years. Rest may be enough for recovery. The self resets itself, starts anew."

The person standing next to you may be dying.  
May be dead and gone for many years, waiting for life.  
How to get through the emotional storms, to learn more about succeeding and failing, and "move toward a richer blend of trust and circumspection"

"The Bible speaks of God's voice coming from inside a whirlwind or other storms."  
- Michael Eigen

"His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last, but violent fires soon burn out themselves;  
small showers last long, but sudden storms are short"  
- Shakespeare on Richard II

"Yet, because outward storms the strongest break, and strength itself by confidence grows weak, this new world may be safer, being told the dangers and diseases of the old"  
- John Donne

"There is a great deal of unmapped country within us which would have to be taken into account in an explanation of our gusts and storms."  
- George Elliot

"Put your shoes at the door,  
Sleep,  
Prepare for life"  
- T.S Eliot

## Sunday 30th May 2010 - Dr Malcolm Sinclair

"At some time in our life we may have to turn away from seeing, at least for a while, because certain child parts of us are not strengthened or freshened by our seeing"  
- Robert Bly

"How shall I name you, immortal, mild, proud shadows? I only know that all we know comes from you, and that you come from Eden on flying feet."  
- W.B Yeats

"Throw away the lights, the definitions and say what you see in the dark, that it is this or that it is that; but do not use rotted names. Nothing must stand between you and the shape you take on when the Christ shape has been destroyed."  
-Theodore Roethke

"And death shall have no dominion. Though lovers be lost, love shall not, and death shall have no dominion."

-Dylan Thomas

## **Sunday 23rd May 2010 - Dr Malcolm Sinclair**

In a world of tremendous upheavels such as ours, where almost all the old moorings are uprooted, it is simply maddening to try to secure and maintain one's bearings.

- Howard Thurman

I am being driven forward into an unknown land, the pass grows steeper, the air colder and sharper. Wind from my unknown goal stirs the strings of expectation. Still the question: Shall I ever get there, there where life resounds a clear, pure note in the silence?

- Dan Hammarskjold

Only the hand that erases can write the true thing.

- Meister Eckhart

## **Prayers From Malcolm Sinclair - Sunday 23rd May 2010**

A Prayer to Fix Our Bearings...To Anchor Ourdelves in the Sacred Heart of Things:

My love colours outside the lines, exploring paths that few could ever find, and takes me into places where I've never been before, and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

My soul longs to colour outside the lines, tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine. I want to walk beyond the boundaries where I've never been before, throw open doors to worlds outside the lines.

A Prayer of Gratitude for our Great Resource:

I have a feeling that my boat has struck down there in the depths against a great thing, and nothing

happens...nothing...silence...waves. Nothing happens? Or has everything happened and we are standing now quietly in a new life? (Juan Jiminez)

A Prayer for our Engagement:

I crave the dark; no shadow to inspire, distract, impeded my disaffected soul with wandering. Yet I must go through. No fear can hold me down, confound the center. My mouth is full of stones. I long to find that field, that sacred field of my unburdening. There, you wait my shy, besotted soul, in love again. And though the game is fixed and though the stones are shards. This time you will, this time you must lay down your cards. (Patti Orr)

## Sunday 16th May 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

St Michaels welcomes Dr Malcolm Sinclair, The Minister of Metropolitan United Church Toronto, Canada.

As guest minister for May 16, May 23 and May 30.  
We hope he will thoroughly enjoy his visit and that St Michael's will be warmly enriched by his presence.

"The art of life is to deal with problems as they arise, rather than destroy one's spirit by worrying about them too far in advance."

-Cicero: as in Robert Harris' Imperium

"We crave freedom, but we need to belong. We chase happiness and light, but learn more from the dark, difficult places. We yearn for permanence but are renewed by change. The ugliest thing has its own strange beauty. This contradictory nature of things calls for balance... a tolerance of difference and ambiguity. Life is too subtle to yield to one interpretation."

-Rosaline Price

"The bulk of the population are currently rethinking their religion. It is changing over from God-centred to life-centred... The new religion of life is not likely to become dogmatic in the way that theism has. It has no creed, no priesthood, and indeed no organization into a distinct sacred society."

- Don Cupitt

## Sunday 9th May 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

There is an emptiness that seems to cry-out to be filled. But even our spasms of purposeful activity may not diminish that emptiness.

Many people try to 'make up' for the absence of purpose and purposeful activity in their lives. "Even the caged factory farm hen devours her daily nutritional needs in a few minutes pecking at the feed with which she is supplied and then is left with nothing at all to do. As a result, she will restlessly peck at her companions, and all factory farm hens are now 'debeaked' to stop them killing each other."

-Peter Singer

"Some people - typically men - find their purpose by taking a competitive attitude to life."

-Peter Singer

## Sunday 2nd May 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"There has never been greater hunger or need for a better and deeper understanding of what it means to be human."

-Steven Levy, Emory School of Medicine

A core belief in human life is intrinsically significant. This poignancy extends to all we do and are in life. Our existence is a creative process - making a life. We humans possess an innate desire to deepen our understanding of who we are, of our purpose and meaning.

-Nader Shabahangi

"The mystery of life and death has been one of the primary motives for humanity's search for the meaning of life."

"How one lives has much to do with how one dies."

-M. Massoudi

While we live, we are able to experience five areas of growth:

A greater appreciation of life;

A changed sense of priorities;

Warmer more intimate relationships with others

Greater personal strength

Recognition of new paths for one's life and enhanced spiritual development.

-K. Heffernan et al

"My Father told me, after he had undergone a surgery, that due to complications, he almost died. In jest I replied: 'Why didn't you.' Astounded, he said, 'I was afraid. I like living. I love living.'"

-Stanley Keleman

"There is a hunger that remains after other hungers have been met -

We call this our 'spirit' hunger."

- from This Hungry Time, Macnab

## **Sunday 25th April: ANZAC Day 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"The traditional worship of God has widened into the CELEBRATION OF LIFE. Faith is a matter of saying "YES" to life in all of its planetary complexity"

"We humans must live without the divine heavenly props thought to exist in the past... We must mature as God is mature."

"An anonymous host of genuine enquirers...value the spirituality of the past, but who wonder where the path of faith is now leading."

"Christianity stands at a critical point in its long and complex history"

"..What attracted people in the first century is not necessarily what we of the 21st century would find attractive. We are in a very different cultural situation from that of Jesus, and also of those who shaped Christianity."

"We need to be fully aware of the ever evolving and changing character of the human religious quest..."

"... The pioneers of the modern secular world were all thinkers deeply immersed in the Christian tradition."

"The real future of the Judeo-Christian path is a secular one. Far from being the enemy of Christianity, the truly secular life is the legitimate continuation of the Judeo Christian tradition."

[NB: All of the above quotations have been taken from Sir Lloyd Geering's book- "Coming Back To Earth"]

## **Sunday 18th April 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

"That which does not kill me makes me stronger."  
-Friedrich Nietzsche

"The world breaks everyone and afterward. Many are strong at the broken places."  
-Ernest Hemingway

"Sometimes the person is thrown back on his/her own resources and discovers, to his/her amazement, that there is a flow of consciousness, a deep river of awareness, which he/she can tap into and use."  
-Edgar Levenson

"When I look back on my childhood, I wonder how I survived at all."  
-Frank McCourt

"To live into the future means to leap into the unknown, and this requires a degree of courage for which there is no immediate precedent, and which few people realize."  
-Rollo May

"Music helps, and music heals.  
Music forms a significant, and on the whole, pleasant part of life for most of us - not only external music we hear with our ears, but internal music that plays in our hearts."  
-Oliver Sacks

So we sit and are quiet  
In the calm and the stillness  
And the depth of it all  
is good in our heart.  
Sit quietly,  
For it is in the quietness that we grow.  
-Ainslie Meares

## **Sunday 11th April 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

You will find plenty of worthwhile things to do. You will not be bored, or lack fulfillment in your life. Most important of all, you will know you have not lived and died for nothing; because you will have become part of the great tradition of those who have responded

to the amount of pain and suffering in the universe by trying to make the world a better place.

Peter Singer: How to Live.

Don't get into the Doldrums. "The Doldrums are where nothing ever happens, and nothing ever changes. No thinking. No Laughing.

Monica Grandy and Steve Tuber

"In accepting new experience and formulating it to myself, I enter a new world that I have created out of which I emerge different."

Stanley Keleman

## Sunday 4th April 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

Easter is a time of celebration.

It is a time of awakening to new possibilities.

It is a celebration of life, the Gift of life, the wonder of life

this unrepeatable life

this life to be lived once

this life to be lived fully and well.

Easter is a time of laughter

as our kids search for Easter Eggs

as they talk of the Easter "Bunny"

as they see how life can be a life of growth and good fun.

Out of the night that conquers me

Black as the Pit from pole to pole

I thank whatever gods may be

For my unconquerable soul.

-William Ernest Henley

Make Easter Mean More-

Easter tells the story of the Resurrection. But what is the real meaning of that Resurrection? What is the meaning of our Resurrection?

The real resurrection is not in the biblical legend.

The real resurrection is not in all the outward symbols.

The real resurrection is in the mind and the heart.

"This is the new reality.

There is no going back"

-Nelson Mandela

"Evasive Source of all vitality

here discloses exuberant streams

of nascent life."

-Part of the Tapestry poem.

## Sunday 28th March 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"Within each one of us there is an internal mental world- I have come to think of as the sea inside- this is a wonderfully rich place, filled with thoughts and feelings, memories and dreams, hopes and wishes. Of course it can also be a turbulent place, where we experience the dark side of all these wonderful feelings and thoughts- fears, sorrows, dreads, regrets, nightmares. Who among us has not felt overwhelmed by the sensations from within our minds?"

Daniel Siegel

We have all benefited from hindsight and foresight- and insight. But here today we will focus on MINDSIGHT. It gives us a deeper and wider opportunity to explore "who we are, to create a life of deeper meaning", and a richer internal world.

"In the consciousness of widespread violence, multiple life stresses, and the strains on our planet, 'A Theology of Beauty' points to a humanity concerned about sustaining the beauty of life"

Sandra Foster

The human mind can be cluttered, confused, conflicted, grief-stricken, damaged. We not only need a contemporary psychology of the mind, we need a theology of the Renewal and Restoration of our troubled minds.

We all have times of celebration- if not in rowdy events, then in the quietness of a satisfying moment. Would a theology of celebration make a major difference? Palm Sunday is about something beautiful, open minds, hearts ready to celebrate.

## Sunday 21st March 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab

"We seek to quiet the daily busy work and chatter to access the inner stillness and wisdom. There are different names for this hidden sphere: the individual soul, the realm of spirit, the infinite. It is experienced through awe and mystery. The inner world has a powerful impact on outer world.

Each moment of life, we experience the pumping of the heart, the flow of blood, the rhythm of breathing...We need rest between bursts of activity whether in a momentary, daily, monthly or yearly cycle."

Dr W.B Stewart, Plastic Surgeon

"The being of God is seen in the values of love, justice and compassion - qualities to be manifested within the human race.

Christianity and all religions must now come to terms with the new global context."

Llyod Geering

"Anger closes our hearts; compassion is a doorway to an open heart."

Dr Dean Ornish, Cardiologist.

"One reason why people have interest in organised religion is..it loses the spiritual essence that's most meaningful: the underlying spirit that connects us."

Dr Dean Ornish

"A large empirical literature shows that people who are happier achieve better life outcomes, including mental health, effective coping and even longevity."  
Michael Conn, Psychology researcher.

Daily positive emotions predict increases in ego resilience and life satisfaction.

## **Sunday 14th March 2010 - Dr Francis Macnab**

Welcome. You are here. From time to time you will probably wonder -

What part does religion and church play in the real world?

The real world of sickness and health -

The real world of war and the brutality of human beings -

The real world of doubtful values and a mixture of ethics -

The real world of