



SUMMER 2015

# PRO CHRISTO ET ECCLESIA

Montreal Diocesan Theological College Newsletter

“My work as Principal drew me daily into wonder and now I look forward to living more fully with the things that inspire that particular movement of the soul.”

(The Rev. Dr. John Simons, Principal of MDTC, 1991-2015)



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## MONTREAL DIOCESAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

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Director of Pastoral Studies  
Director of Lay Education  
Chaplain  
Administrator  
Development Coordinator

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The Rev. Dr. Karen Egan  
Afra Saskia Tucker  
The Rev. Rhonda Waters  
Beth Reed  
Afra Saskia Tucker

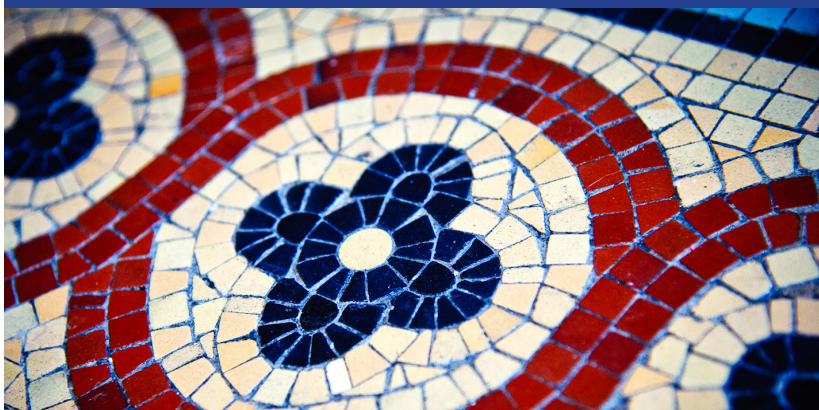
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Cover: The Rev. Dr. John Simons with his various students  
over the years. Photo taken at the dinner held  
in his honour on May 19, 2015.

Photos on this page by Linda Wei

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# Daily into Wonder

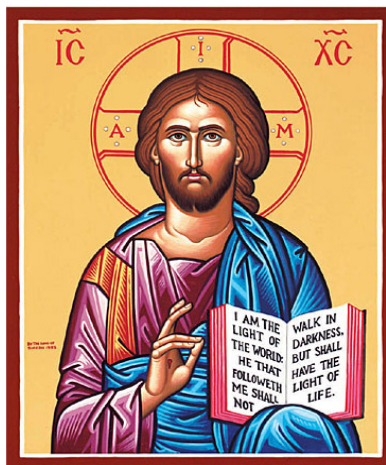
## Learning from Christ the Teacher

BY THE REV. CANON DR. JOHN SIMONS

In Christian iconography, the teacher is depicted holding a book which is often open to a text indicated by the teacher's hand. The book, of course, represents sacred tradition, of which scripture is the norm. The icon effectively situates the viewer in a school, inviting her/him into the world posited by scripture and expositing by the teacher. My vocation to priestly ministry has brought me to return to this icon both in imagination and in its many concrete instances again and again over the years. As Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College (Dio), it was my privilege to live in the presence of this icon, not as a lonely spectator, but in the company of so many others—colleagues, students, ecumenical partners, administrative staff, board members, etc.

To be sure, there are those whose experience of the college will be quite different from mine, but, for me, the everyday tasks of administration were given context by those moments in the chapel, reciting the daily office or singing the eucharistic prayer of the church or listening to, and being inspired by, the sermon

of a colleague, as well as by those conversations in the classroom reflecting on the mysteries of faith or on our individual acts of ministry in the field. And, of course, there were the meals we shared: breakfast after the Friday morning Eucharist, lunch on Wednesdays in term, and the Advent potluck—extensions of the sacramental meal



*“... theology and ministry cannot be divorced.”*

we celebrated regularly. To have been a part of Dio, of the Montreal School of Theology, and of the McGill community was, for me, extraordinarily stimulating. Nor, lest my earlier reference

to sacred tradition mislead, was it simply a matter of my passing on information to the next generation. To the contrary, the tradition in which we live and breathe as Christians is not a system closed to exploration, a metanarrative that settles all questions in advance. The fact that we speak of the mysteries of faith should be a clue. There is more than information in our creed; there is poetry that stretches and breaks our expectations and always surprises us with its imaginative possibilities. For me, this is one reason why theology and ministry cannot be divorced.

At my retirement dinner, I said that my work as Principal had drawn me daily into wonder and that now I looked forward to living more fully with the things that inspire that particular movement of the soul. So, in one sense, my life after Dio will, I hope, be an extension and deepening of the lessons I have begun to learn in the school of Christ the Teacher. I am profoundly grateful to all of you who have been my classmates in his school. You will always be with me.

*The Rev. Canon Dr. John Simons, Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College, 1991-2015, now lives in Sackville, NB with his wife Catherine.*

# Theological Education

## Nurturing Vocations Grounded in Knowledge

BY THE REV. DR. PATRICIA KIRKPATRICK

For over 24 years as Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College, the Rev. Dr. John Simons steered a course for the college through seas filled with some very murky waters. Not only was theological education in question at the university and the numbers of theological students at the academy diminishing but those who were entering to be trained in the classical disciplines of Theology were coming with perspectives which could hardly be thought of as typical. Early on it became clear that our Principal would be required to proceed with the task of Formation for Anglican Orders in ways quite different from previous generations.

With his training and extensive background in both matters intellectual and parochial, John soon set about defending the college's place in the consortium and the consortium's place in the Faculty of Religious Studies and therefore the university. A monumental task even if unrecognized by those in the parishes.



The Rev. Canon Dr. John Simons addresses Convocation participants as MDTC Principal for the last time.

*“John was acutely aware that whatever else was needed it would be a generation of ordained scholars whose knowledge base would allow them the flexibility to cope with ever-changing ministerial patterns.”*

John's philosophically trained mind was not sympathetic to more businesslike approaches to education much less theological education. Certainly he had little time for those who preferred to see in their vocation a means to an end if that end was a career in the ordained ministry. John was acutely aware that whatever else was needed

it would be a generation of ordained scholars whose knowledge base would allow them the flexibility to cope with ever-changing ministerial patterns. He was also acutely aware as anyone in theological education can be, that the context of theological education was no longer one of privilege but was

one that had to fight to be heard in the ever increasing din of competing town square voices. The recovery of the 50's and early 60's when theology seemed to be regaining its place was short-lived and by the time of the 90's theology was more commonly seen as arcane and irrelevant. In times like these it was our good fortune to have as Principal of Montreal Diocesan Theological College someone as articulate as John, and someone who could provide the much needed Christian Apologetics as John provided time and again, both in his lectures in the College and the University as well as

in his profound and thought provoking sermons. Of course life in a consortium is many-faceted and I would be remiss were I not to doff my cap in thanksgiving that I was so fortunate to have had such a wonderfully good-humored and generous colleague. One who could genuinely understand the absurdities of life and so not become convinced of the academy's ever incessant demand that reward be given out on the basis of so-called merit.

It will be above all John's understanding of God's grace and his living out his life

in that grace that I will be thankful for in years to come. Indeed I do not think that it is too much of a stretch to say that I will be able to tell those students apart who were trained by our Principal; students who will, God willing, show forth that same grace in their ministries.

*Dr. Patricia Kirkpatrick is Chair of Biblical Studies and Graduate Program Director at the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill. She is also an alumna and honorary faculty member of Montreal Diocesan Theological College.*



Joint Ecumenical Convocation 2015 at the Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul. Pictured: The Rev. Dr. Patricia Kirkpatrick, the Rev. Dr. Douglas Hall, the Rev. Rhonda Waters, the Ven. Bruce Myers, the Rev. Josée Lemoine, the Rt. Rev. Barry Clarke, the Rev. Dr. Karen Egan, and the Rev. Canon Dr. John Simons.



# John Simons

## A Teacher of Anglicanism with an Ecumenical Spirit

BY THE VEN. BRUCE MYERS

It seems fitting that I'm writing this on a plane as I return from a week-long meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order, the theological roundtable of the World Council of Churches, whose mission is "to serve the churches as they call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and advance to towards that unity in order that the world may believe."

It's fitting because I first learned about Faith and Order—and so much about the ecumenical movement as a whole—from John Simons. It was impossible to be a student of John's without encountering ecumenical texts, and through them catching something of the ecumenical spirit to which they give expression.

With John as our guide we explored Anglican sacramental theology through the lens of Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, Faith and



The Rev. Dr. John Simons addresses those who gathered for his farewell in May at Church of St. John the Evangelist.

*"John has shown his students that in recognizing and receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit in other ecclesial traditions you aren't somehow compromising those of our church."*

Order's groundbreaking convergence text. We studied systematic theology using the documents of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International

Commission. We learned about the implications of the Waterloo Declaration at the very moment our church was coming into full communion

with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

This was far more than some perfunctory inclusion of historical texts on church unity in the bibliographies of John's courses. It was rather evidence of his own deep commitment to the church's visible unity, something he gave witness to in his daily life and work.

While I was a student at Dio, John served as a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada; he opened the door to Armenian Orthodox and Lutheran students studying at the college; and he made it possible for Anglican students to experience full communion firsthand by allowing us to serve internships in a Lutheran parish.

John also modelled for his students—in that quiet and understated way of his—an ecumenical spirit in his wider role within the Montreal School of Theology. The respect he held for the students, faculty, and ecclesial traditions of our sister colleges was palpable. I still remember a sermon John delivered in Saint Luke's Chapel, gently (but unmistakably) admonishing

the Anglican students for having sometimes adopted an air of liturgical, ecclesiological, and doctrinal superiority when it came to our Presbyterian and United Church classmates.

In both his teaching and personal example, John has embodied the notion that to be Anglican is to be ecumenical, and that our tradition of Christianity is called to a particular vocation of giving visible expression to the unity of Christ's church. At the same time he has shown his students that in recognizing and receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit in other ecclesial traditions you aren't somehow compromising those of our church.

It wasn't until I had graduated from Dio, and began encountering more regularly Anglican clergy who had studied elsewhere, that I came to appreciate just how ecumenically saturated my theological education had been, inside and outside the classroom. This evident widespread lack of ecumenical formation of Anglican clergy has become such a preoccupation that it has become the focus of my doctor of ministry research.

I am ever grateful for a theological education that obligated me to confront the scandal of Christian division, and to resist the temptation to grow comfortable in those divisions. It has become the focus of my ministry, and an important dimension of the ministries of so many other Anglican clergy, because it was also a fundamental aspect of the ministry of John Simons.



The Ven. Bruce Myers stands up alongside several other students taught by John Simons during his 24-year tenure as Principal.

*Archdeacon Bruce Myers OGS (Dio class of 2004) is the Anglican Church of Canada's Coordinator for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations.*



# MDTC Convocation 2015: A Joint Ecumenical Event

Hosted by the Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal



Clockwise from top left: United Theological College M.Div student **Joelle Leduc** and prospective MDTC M.Div student **Joel Amis** receive prizes; EfM graduate **Ann Cumyn** receives her diploma from mentor the Rev. **Sophie Rolland**; MDTC M.Div. graduate **Josée Lemoine** offers the prayers of the people; The Rev. **Douglas John Hall** delivers the Joint Convocation Address; EfM graduate **Lorna Gordon** and her spouse **Ken Tomlin**. Center: Diocese of Quebec EfM graduate **Gabriel Kwenga** (left) and Diocese of Montreal EfM graduate **Ann Cumyn** (right).





Clockwise from top left: MDTC Administrator **Beth Reed** and prospective MDTC M.Div student **Tyson Rosberg**; McGill University Religious Studies Professor **Torrance Kirby** (middle) and MDTC Development Coordinator and Interim Director of Lay Education **Afra Tucker** (right); **The Rev. Robert Camara** (M.Div '11) and spouse **Gabriele Spina**; EfM graduates and mentors from the Dioceses of Montreal and Quebec, clockwise from top left: **the Ven. David Oliver**, **Norm Starkey**, **the Rev. James Pratt**, **the Rev. Sophie Rolland**, **Ann Cumyn**, **Lorna Gordon**, and **Gabriel Kwenga**.



# Anglican-United Chaplaincy at MDTC

## Holiness and Refuge in the Heart of the University

BY THE REV. JEAN-DANIEL WILLIAMS

I am wrapping up my first academic year as the Anglican-United Christian chaplain at McGill University. It has been a blessed whirlwind of a year. We have built strong connections between the chaplaincy and the local parishes of each denomination, Christ Church Cathedral and St. James United. Both parishes have welcomed me to preach. Christ Church's wonderful weekly young adult Bible study, Hungry Minds, has opened itself to United Church students, rooted in its Anglican home while fostering ecumenical discussions. Our students have shared in a monthly dinner and bilingual worship service that we have designed to be an ecumenical fellowship opportunity that does not take away from their intergenerational Sunday morning worship at their own parishes. Ten of our student leaders joined me for a retreat to St. Donat where we brainstormed our future and where I believe we became a truly ecumenical community

of young adults, eager to work together. And all of the successes in our renewing and revitalising chaplaincy have been planned and organised from my office at Montreal Diocesan Theological College (Dio).

*“Part of every work day has included wonderful theological discussion, humorous banter, and brainstorming with Dio’s faculty and staff.”*

Doing ministry “in” Dio but not being “of” Dio has been a symbiotic and enriching experience for me. On a personal level, being the Anglican-United chaplain, but coming from the United Church, having my physical office in an Anglican setting has been an invaluable

professional and spiritual connection to the Anglican side of my vocation. Part of every work day has included wonderful theological discussion, humorous banter, and brainstorming with Dio’s faculty and staff. On Wednesdays I have alternated participation between Dio and UTC midweek worship services. At Dio, I have found a profoundly welcoming place, eager to include this United pastor in Anglican life as far as polity allows.

The far more profound and exciting part of hosting the chaplaincy at Dio has been watching McGill students from across all conceivable majors from undergraduates through PhD candidates, both the devoutly Christian and the Christianity-curious, come into Dio. While they have come initially to seek me out for candy or pastoral care, they get to step into a sacred place of theological training. The simple setting of my office, the question of “What is Dio and what happens here?” has started



a student on a path of their own discernment. This discernment may yet lead to one or two more ordained clergy, but far more often and just as sacredly it leads to many of our students in diverse fields seeing the holiness, importance, and refuge of a place for theological training in the heart of their university. Two of the most enthusiastic McGill undergraduates who have lingered often at my office and in the Dio common room, one from

each denomination, Jaime Grennan and Ben Stuchbery, are now participating in Dio's Montreal Mission Internship, for example.

It is my prayer that centering our Anglican-United chaplaincy at Dio affirms the College's role as place that trains priests and is a centre of Christian ministry to all of McGill and beyond. I am grateful for Dio's hospitality, and pray the chaplaincy will bless Dio as much it blesses the chaplaincy.



The Rev. Jean-Daniel Williams

*The Rev. Jean-Daniel Williams is the Anglican and United Christian Chaplain of McGill University.*

## MDTC's Next Principal



The Montreal Diocesan Theological College community is delighted to welcome the Rev. Dr. Donald Boisvert as the next principal of the college. Dr. Boisvert, a graduate of MDTC and professor at Concordia University, will assume his new post effective September 1, 2015. He brings extensive experience in academic administration, a deep familiarity with the local context, and a demonstrated commitment to the college and its community, showing a readiness to engage with

the majority francophone, diverse, modern and secular environment in which the college and the Anglican Church in Quebec function. Dr. Boisvert has researched and published widely in the following areas: the history of Christianity (particularly the cult of saints) and the intersections of religion, gender, and sexuality. He is also an assistant priest at Montreal's Christ Church Cathedral, with shared responsibility for French-language ministry.

# Montreal Mission Internship

BY THE REV. RHONDA WATERS

The Montreal Mission Internship, run by the Montreal Diocesan Theological College (Dio), is a hands-on experiment in mission--what does it look like, how does it feel, what does it make us think about? Five very different young adults took up this challenge and designed five very different projects. They have each learned a great deal and those of us with the privilege of spending time with them have learned a great deal as well. The interns and their work have challenged us to think about mission in the broadest possible sense, to contemplate the ways in which God is already at work in the world and to be creative in the ways in which we can imagine joining in. They have

asked good, hard questions about faith, about church, about community, and justice and truth and suffering and hope and relationships and the list goes on and on.

But the interns aren't the only ones who have been experimenting with mission this summer. Dio and its funding partners, the Diocese of Montreal and the Anglican Foundation, have been experimenting as well. This internship has been an opportunity for us to think about how we reach out beyond our institutions and our traditional activities. These five interns were not hired in the hopes that they would become priests or even active (and donating) lay leaders in Anglican

parishes around the city. We have not spent much time in formal educational activities, theological or otherwise. We have not used our lovely, if rather old-fashioned, college chapel for worship. Instead, we have entered into the conversation as learners in our own right, as seekers after God and God's desire for our own lives and the life of our institution. Few, if any, questions have been answered. But we have all grown over the course of these weeks and I am confident that the full measure of that growth will not be realized until well after the internship is over.

For a better understanding of the work that has been going on, please visit Dio's website where the interns have been blogging steadily all summer. We hope that you will find all of these reflections thought-provoking and hope-inspiring, evidence that God is working in many wonderful ways to lead us into mission: <http://dio-mdtc.ca/montreal-mission-internship-2015-reflections/>



Participants of the 2015 Montreal Mission Internship with the Rev. Karen Egan and the Rev. Rhonda Waters.

*The Rev. Rhonda Waters is an MMI 2015 Program Leader and MDTC Chaplain. She is also Associate Priest and Director of Education at Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal.*