

# Blue Fire

**Meeting:** 1  
**Topic:** Searching for Faith.....

## Schedule

7.00 pm	Dinner
7.30 pm	Opening Prayer
7.40 pm	Reading Reflection Story Personal activities Discussion
9.15 pm	Closing Prayer

Sources:

*Mary for Us Today*  
Br Nicholas Howlett fms  
Used with permission.

Face Book Group



# 1. Searching.

## Opening Poem:

By Joyce Rupp

Inside each of us  
There awaits a wonder  
Full of freedom

She waits  
to dance  
in rooms  
of our heart  
that are closed  
dark and cluttered

she waits to dance in spaces  
where negative feelings  
have built barricades  
and stock-piled weapons

she waits to dance in the corners  
where we still  
do not believe in  
our goodness

inside each of us  
there awaits  
a wonder  
full  
spirit of freedom

she will lift light feet  
and make glad songs  
within us  
on the day we open the door of ego  
and let the enemies stomp out.

## Tommy's Story

Some years ago, I stood watching my university students file into the classroom for our first session in The Theology of Faith. That was the day I first saw Tommy. My eyes and my mind both blinked. Her was combing his long hair. which hung all the way down to his shoulders. It was the first time I had ever seen a boy with hair that long. I guess it was just coming into fashion then. I know in my mind that it isn't what's on your head but in it that counts; but on that day. I was unprepared and my emotions flipped. Immediately I filed Tommy under "S" for strange . . . very strange.

Tommy turned out to be the "atheist in residence" in my Theology of faith course. He constantly objected to. Smirked at, or whined about the possibility of an unconditionally loving Father - God. We lived with each other in relative peace for one semester, although I admit he was at times a nuisance. When he came up at the end of the course to turn in his final exam, he asked in a slightly cynical tone: "Do you think I'll ever find God?" I decided on a little shock therapy. "No!" I said strongly. "Oh;" he responded, "I thought that was the product you were pushing" I let him get five steps from the classroom door and then called out: "Tommy! I don't think you'll ever find him, but I'm absolutely certain He will find you!" He shrugged a little and left my class and my life. I was a bit disappointed that he had missed my clever line.

## Elijah

Elijah was a prophet of Israel living in 900 BC. He gives a warning to Ahab, king of Israel, that there will be years of drought, a drought so severe that not even dew will fall. This catastrophe will come because Ahab and his queen--Jezebel--stand at the end of a line of kings of Israel who are said to have "done evil in the sight of the Lord." Elijah flees for his life after the queen tries to kill him.

**Read** : 1 Kings 19:4-13 (Searching)



### ♣ Individual Activity – Wonder Experiences

**Write** in the white space on this page and individually answer the following questions.....

1. What were some of the wonder experiences in your life?
2. When did they happen?
3. What impact did they have on you?

## 2. Today's World.

### The World Today

Modern life is complex, demanding. Instead of being left with more time to pursue the really important questions' such as, "What is the purpose of Life?" we have forgotten the question and simply run from one thing to another.

We live in extremely confusing times with instant news coverage, thousands of books to read, and much undirected leisure time. We have been tricked by today's world! I have a friend who is put into a frenzy every holidays by getting her two teenage boys to all of their activities. They must change their clothes in the car as they leave for swimming practice and drive to tennis lessons. Then they must eat in the car on the way to cricket practice.

How many families have to fight for a single night at home together and how many families have abandoned even that? How many families never talk to each other because it is easier to leave the television or the computer on?

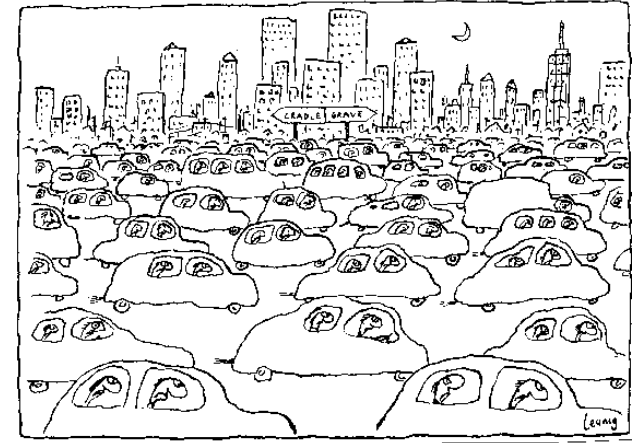
We seem to be so free and so open-minded. It is good to have an open mind, but as one cartoonist says. "Keep an open mind, but not so open that your brains fall out".

### Myths of Modernism

The Myths of Modernism are dying all around us. Our sophistication and complexity are self-destructing. For several hundred years we were convinced in the West that progress, human reason, and higher technology would resolve the human dilemma. They clearly have not. Without denying the gifts of mind and science, we now doubt their messianic promise. More analysis is not necessarily more wisdom, and more options are not necessarily freedom. The accumulation of things is not likely to bring more happiness, and time saved is rarely used for contemplation.

Progress has too often been at the expense of the earth, and human reason has too easily legitimated war, greed, and the pursuit of a private agenda, while technology pays those who serve it, especially the moguls of militarism and medicine. Our philosophy of progress has led us to trust in our own limitlessness and in our future more than in the quality and the mystery of the now. Religion at its best is always concerned about the depth and breadth and wonder of things. In this sense we have become an impatient and irreligious people. The paschal mystery, the yin and yang of all reality is out shouted by the quite recent and unproven slogan: "we can have it all!"

**Read:** Luke 12:16-21 (A rich man).



### ♠ Discussion Activity

1. How is your life complex?
2. How has our society idolised progress and status?
3. What does the Gospel of Luke Chapter 12 mean for our lives as Christians?

### 3. Finding Room for Faith.

#### Mary, A Woman of Her Time

When we first meet Mary in the Gospels, she is about to become an unmarried mother, in a strict male-dominated society. Nothing leads us to believe that Mary led an unusual life on earth. She was probably poor, living in a culture where females were not legally equal to their husbands, were raised largely for child-bearing and excluded from public life. No historical evidence supports Mary's active participation in Jesus' ministry. Mary probably led the ordinary life of the poor. She knew all the poverty, toil, oppression, uncertainty in an occupied, under-developed country. Like so many in our world, she struggled for a dignified existence. Weaving, spinning, and grinding wheat for bread - these mundane chores filled her days. She was wife of a craftsman, mother of a wandering teacher.



Mary lived an ordinary life and wore the customary clothes of women two thousand years ago. She cooked and ate the typical food and as a younger girl played the usual games. She followed the customs of her time, just as we follow the customs of our time. Like the other Galilean women, she probably wore colourful clothes - blue, brown and crimson - and perhaps earrings, gold rings, bracelets and ankle chains. She would have drawn water from the common well and shared a common oven, exchanging news with the villagers.

Mary felt all human emotions, such as joy and sorrow, fear and anxiety, success and failure, happiness and grief. All the feelings which we experience in our everyday relationships, were also felt by Mary.

The formal religious life of a Jewish woman was rather restricted in those days. In the outer world, her external religious life was far less apparent than that of the male. While the woman was also bound by the commandments, she was released from all commandments that tied her to definite times. The reason for this was that she was bound to her duties as a mother. Since the mother had to keep the children quiet for long periods on end, she could not keep up with the hours prescribed for prayer, so she was released from those. And the woman was naturally released from the most difficult and time consuming of duties, the study of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

#### The Need to Stop!

A year twelve student wrote an article entitled "One Regret" for the school newspaper before his exams.

"Society tends to push us to go, go, go! It leaves you little time to think about where you are going or why you are going there. It seems to do your thinking for you. As a result you tend to follow the crowd rather than your own personal conviction. Now all this has begun to change for me. I started to put aside a few minutes each night for the purpose of reviewing my day. I asked myself about some of the things I did and why I did them. However, there is one regret I started this too late. I didn't start until year nine, when I realized I wasn't really happy. In fact, I was pretty disgusted with myself. This was especially true when my marks started to slide. I tried to figure out what was wrong. I decided that I was wasting way too much time with my friends - doing little or nothing.

**Read** : Luke Chapter 1 :1-20; 57-64 (Zechariah)

#### ♠ Discussion Activity

1. How does your life compare to Mary's life? Is it ordinary?
2. Why do we need to stop? How?
3. Why couldn't Zechariah recognise God's work? How does this relate to us?