

Note from Sylvia:

The Father Johannes Rivoire omi referenced is the Father Rivoire who covered for Father Eric Dejaeger in Baker Lake, NWT (now Nunavut) in 1989 after Dejaeger was investigated and subsequently charged.

<http://www.theinquiry.ca/wordpress/charged/dejaeger-2/sex-charges-against-priest-shock-to-northern-town/>

## Intermissions

### Greeting The Light That Fills The Earth

"... choosing  
real life  
can be  
heroic . . ."

Last Easter I celebrated Jesus' resurrection at Arviat on the Hudson Bay west coast with Father Johannes Rivoire, O.M.I., and that Inuk community. At the Vigil, there were many baptisms and lots of joy, and later on Easter day, a feast of caribou meat right in the church, and then the traditional Easter games outdoors, even though it was -30 C. with a good stiff wind.

Knud Rasmussen, part Dane, part Inuk, had led the Fifth Thule Expedition into that area back in the early 20's. Able to speak the local language, he collected what he called

"the intellectual and cultural life" of the Inuit at that time, a priceless treasure.

I had used one of the poems he had collected in my Easter homily. It was about a man rising to greet "the light that fills the whole earth". It concludes:

"And yet there is only one great thing,  
The only thing: to live."

Father Rivoire and others had explained to me that the Inuit had centred their culture around survival. So harsh is the climate, so tenuous is life, with animal fat as the only source of fuel, and stone age technology the only way to get it, that their whole astonishing ingenuity had to be directed at that target. "The only thing: to live."

D. H. Lawrence imagines Jesus awakening in the tomb that first Easter. He is nauseous and stiff. The light stings his eyes. It hurts to move. The temptation is to lapse back into unconsciousness, to

avoid the pain of living, to choose death, to let sin reign, and darkness to conquer.

That description may be theologically inaccurate, but it reminds us that resurrection can be painful and death sweet, that choosing life, real life, can be heroic, and like that unknown Inuk poet, Jesus invites us to choose life.

Rasmussen records travelling through the Repulse Bay area for days, once without seeing a single soul, when suddenly his party came upon an old woman fishing. Her name was Takornaq ("Recluse"), and her initial instinct was to run from these strangers. But later, in her hut, she spontaneously made up this song which Rasmussen preserved:

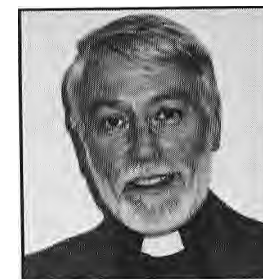
The lands around my dwelling  
Are more beautiful  
From the day  
When it is given for  
me to see  
Faces I have never  
seen before

## Intermissions

All is more beautiful  
All is More beautiful  
And life is  
thankfulness  
These guests of mine  
Make my house  
great.

What a great open  
heart sang those words!  
So typical of the  
welcome the first  
Europeans received  
here.

The Risen Lord  
comes into our life, a  
surprise. Through him  
we see the face of the  
Father. "All is more  
beautiful! And life is  
thankfulness". This is  
the Easter I wish you  
all.



Fr. Barry McGrory:

"Choosing life can be  
heroic . . ."



FR. BARRY MCGRORY