"The machine time of the clock is a time cut loose from the temporality of body, nature, and the cosmos, from context-bound being and spiritual existence."
—Barbara Adam

"Our quest for the precise time of day may go down in history as the greatest obsession of the twentieth century."
—Anthony Aveni

Imagine springtime and sitting on a park bench reading a book, looking up occasionally to watch children playing in the playground. Across the park, daffodils and crocuses are bursting with color, and the redbud trees are blossoming with their dark pink blooms. Sitting there in the park, you are aware that countless relationships with time are occurring all around. The book immerses you in the temporality of its narrative, carrying you along in its flow and rhythm. Looking up from the book to the children at play, their time may move fast or slow, perhaps focused only on the present, without a care as to when they will have to go home. And across the field, ancient tree branches move gently in the breeze that carry the first scent of spring blossoms. What emerges is an awareness of sitting at the intersection of innumerable rhythms and flows of time—beginnings and endings, quickening and slowing, growth and decay—that are embedded in everything: that is everything. You sit surrounded by temporal diversity, an ecology of “timescapes” as rich and complex as any eco-diversity. And each movement and footstep you take send out ripples in time, creating another connection, another context, another world, rippling back to touch you again and again.

How do we mark such an extraordinary experience? How do we convey such temporal complexity and aliveness of time? Perhaps the very difficulty of grasping such time and reining it in lies at the heart of industrial time or clock time—time as linear, measured, manageable, and ultimately economical. It takes only a cursory consideration of our everyday life to realize time as resource, time as management tool, and time as principle organizing tool of the modern life. Such a rationality of time may reflect our primal reach for order necessary to secure ourselves in a vast and bewildering cosmos, to anticipate the next movement and relieve our anxiety about what may be coming around the corner. And such time has permitted astonishing coordination of complexities, from social interactions to landing an exploration rover on Mars; time measured not in seconds but nanoseconds and picoseconds (one trillionth).

But time that excessively calculates, divides, measures, and dissects our daily experience also meters human life and reduces the complexities of organic rhythms—learning, teaching, loving, playing, listening—to measurable quantities of rational calculation. Even critical notions of time as social construct—linearity versus cyclical time, variance of time scales, that challenge totalitarian “time regimes” (Ida Sabelis)—finally give way to everyday output demands exacerbated by the acceleration and compression of time.

The present moment, then, is no longer time to be experienced but precarious time, when our chance to take hold of the world quickly vanishes. Time measured supplants time experienced. Our lived experience loses its texture and traction upon the world, living out a temporality that leaves us isolated as bystanders of our own lives.

(Continued on Page 2)
CONTINUITY IN COMMUNITY:
AN INTERVIEW WITH FR. BOB O’DONNELL
BY CLARE PILLSBURY ‘13

Religion plays a very important role in the way people experience life events and thus defines our self-identity in a powerful way.

According to Fr. Bob O’Donnell, the new Catholic Chaplain at Macalester and a member of the Paulist Fathers, the importance of self-identity within the Catholic Church is that it is defined not only by the individual but by his or her relationships with others. Bringing the notion of “personal identity” into discussion, Fr. Bob explains that this is different from the term of “self-identity” as the former can sound “locked off or even individualistic.” Instead, there is this idea of the self within the community.

For Catholics, the task of interpreting “self-identity” allows them to create a framework for continuity or exploring further elements themselves. This framework created by interaction with the larger Catholic community can act as a solid foundation, especially when a person is transitioning away from their family and original home. “Indeed,” states Fr. Bob, “in some ways, religion can be experimental, but the other side is when someone gets off a plane from Ghana, comes in from the airport, and comes here to Mass. Minus the music and other settings, the familiarity of the Mass renders it a second home. [This is] something that you suddenly realize can bring people together across an international spectrum.”

An integral part of Catholicism that helps to create this continuity within a community are the rituals which accompany major life events. Fr. Bob explains: “The strange thing [about rituals] is they can be constant in terms of what you see, hear, or feel, even if you mean something very different by it.”

The name most commonly given to these unvarying rituals is “sacrament” which can be defined within traditional Catholicism as “an outward sign of an inward grace, a sacred and mysterious sign or ceremony, ordained by Christ, by which grace is conveyed to our souls.” Sacraments are therefore considered “firm foundations” upon which one can begin to build this sense of self-identity while surrounded by constant traditions and relationships that constitute a community.

Within ritual, especially in sacramental form, you create this contract with both God and with the Catholic Community. The abstract image of Christ can now become solid, and the powerful effects of these sacraments can flow back into people’s lives through God’s gift of grace. What makes sacraments even more powerful, however, is the witness of fellow community members as they pledge to help you in your journey as a fellow member of the Catholic Church.

FRANKENTIME Continued...

“So invoking the modern myth of the monster created and given artificial life by human beings,” writes Buddhist scholar Jack Petranker, “I call this substitute for living Frankentime...The self that lives in Frankentime is itself a mechanistic abstraction...Small wonder we pass our time yearning for ‘other’ times that will transport us ‘away’ from the emptiness of Frankentime: the times of vacations, shopping, and consuming, the times of recreational drugs, extravaganzas of all sorts, and endless varieties of entertainment.”

When our lived experience of time is translated into one of distance, measurement, and scale, it should not surprise us that the subsequent simplifications, omissions, and interpretations seem all too mechanical. Trapped inside the metro-nome or the time-signature, we fail to hear the creative play of musical notes freely inhabiting their own time—lingering, pausing, rushing, or skipping away—in their compositional collaboration with one another. We are left with only small, repetitive patterns of what we already know, predictable sequences that freeze out new and vital ways of experiencing life.

What would it be like to free time from (and for) the clock? Or to smile at the clock that hangs in Rabbi Barry’s office, with all its numbers fallen and gathered into a whimsical pile at the bottom? Not to throw away our clocks, but to see it with a perspective freed from its tyranny? Then time may be restored to the very experience of life itself: to listening, speaking, eating, breathing, sleeping, each with its own temporal quality that combines, forms, and unfolds evermore in the diversity of living timescapes. Such appreciation of time may itself be an invaluable form of knowledge, based in trust, openness, and vitality. Then perhaps there will be time enough to join in children’s games, to enjoy the flowers, and to do our work with loving care and attention. Perhaps, then, the loneliness and desperation of Frankentime may be welcomed into friendship with time that is life itself, known and felt in the heart.

Seem an impossible dream given our current reality? Yes, but perhaps something worth failing.

At the Intersection of Faith and Public Life: A Conversation with Krista Tippett. Early October, Lucy Forster-Smith, Chaplain of the College, and student David Seitz ‘10 had a chance to interview Krista about her own work and vocation in Speaking of Faith with Krista Tippett. The series is public radio’s weekly program about religion, meaning, ethics, and ideas.
I have realized that I am a leaf. Delicate, and vulnerable to hammering currents of the wind. My leaf nature first revealed itself on the opening day of kindergarten. This was the beginning of a treacherous rite of passage that involved perilous activities, such as guessing the number of marbles in a jar and writing names. Eeeeeeek! When it was time for the parents to leave, I began bawling in front of the whole class as I clutched my mom's lower leg, begging her not to go.

This trauma and subsequent eruptions were like x-rays that exposed the sensitivity of my core. A trepidation and sadness dwelled inside me that, when touched, fumed into a blistering temper much greater than the size of my rice-bag sized body. Upon bumping into table ends, I would kick and swear at them; fights were common occurrences, and usually after giving up a run in baseball game, I had to be escorted into my mom's caravan so that my yelling would result in fogged-up windows rather than an ear-piercing sound. Looking back at my pudgy little self, puffed up with tears and fury, I have to let out a little chuckle. However, I am also stilled by my absolute inability to understand my emotions.

Moving forward a couple years to high school, I found myself plagued by questions—many of the melodramatic variety, but also some that really broke me. Daily, I came face to face with a tremendous surge to find a single indisputable path, a fixed calling for my life. And what an unhealthy obsession this was; sitting frozen, head in hands trying to tear out some answer that would just satisfy me. Mind abused tirelessly, never able to let go of my insecurity. This unchanging, constantly meaningful, always satisfying place is something we all search for on some level, whether it be in the form of a relationship, a profession, or a state of mind. And I deeply wonder why we search for this place that defies the laws of reality, and I would hope that answering this question would clarify the wise and unwise ways we interact with the world.

Arriving in sunny St. Paul offered a brief respite from searching. The fresh, perfectly halved, avocado sandwich that was the feel of my feet on fresh pavement, the call of the loon in the great, open boundary waters, the giggle that indicated the completion of my first successful joke… made all my senses tingle. But my addiction swiftly returned. Psychology and philosophy could not help me for they involved more thinking and more analysis. At some point, I sat on a cushion and made a radical change in my deductive process. Rather than thinking about my thoughts, I began to feel them. Unfortunately, this is a method of inquiry that academia does not circulate.

To feel a question is to watch it come into existence, to see it grow inside of you, and to go with each direction that it moves you. This is not metaphor but an actual physical, soul engaging process. Some questions, such as What's for breakfast? require narrow answers, and we could not do without them. However, other questions are too vast to be tamed so quickly. These questions must be saturated with compassion and patience. They must be seen as living things, known ever more intimately through a lifetime.

Winter melons begin as miniscule seeds and mature to fat, juicy, heavy bodies. We cannot witness their moment to moment process of transformation. But we take great joy in discovering when they mature to certain stages. So I now ask this question, From where does my delicacy arise? not knowing in which direction I will be pulled or what colors I will turn, but marveling at the immense transitions that have unfolded and noticing this question become increasingly juicy. I do not mark these transitions but rather they mark me; they reveal themselves in my every interaction.

"To feel a question is to watch it come into existence, to see it grow inside of you."

Traditionally, we mark those transitions which are deemed significant, i.e. graduations, birthdays, and August moon festivals (in Chinese culture). However, to develop attentiveness to the ordinary, blissful, tragic, and nearly imperceptible transitions that are always happening is to experience everything that we are becoming, and we are afforded the ability to identify and explore the places we do not yet know.
WISHING YOU A HAPPY DIWALI
BY NISHA SINGH ’10

While Diwali is widely celebrated culturally with treats, parties and fireworks, it is fundamentally a holiday with religious roots. Hindus, Sikhs and Jains all associate Diwali with religious events, myths, or worship. Though Diwali is observed through many diverse traditions and for many different reasons, it can be universally celebrated because each tradition still identifies with common themes and a shared sense of significance.

For example, Diwali is known worldwide as the Festival of “Light”, and light is interpreted in many ways: the victory of good over evil; the attainment of nirvana (or spiritual enlightenment); the awareness of inner light or “atma”; the coming of moonlight after the “amavasya” (“new moon”).

In addition to inner awareness and the appreciation of goodness, Diwali also celebrates the abundance of the autumn harvest and the coming of the “new year”.

On Diwali, families clean their houses thoroughly, wear new clothing and bestow gifts in hopes of beginning the upcoming year on an auspicious note.

The sense of awakening and occasion for new beginnings that accompanies the celebration of Diwali is something that permeates all traditions. At Macalester this year, the Multifaith Council and MASECA co-sponsored a Diwali puja (prayer) celebration in the Chapel. In the Hindu tradition, it is typical to hold a Lakshmi puja on the night of the new moon to welcome the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi.

This year marks the second official Diwali puja at Macalester College, and we have strived to make it an event that is accessible to people who have never even heard of Diwali while also retaining a familiar and traditional atmosphere for those who have been celebrating Diwali their whole life. This year’s turnout and interest is promising for the sustainability of the event. Veteran and novice Diwali-goers alike joined in the traditions of this joyous occasion with open minds and open hearts.

Nisha Singh helps the Macalester community celebrate Diwali in Weyehaeuser Chapel.