

Heart - to - Heart

North American Bulletin

April 2008
Volume 34, no. 2

*Theme: The Katimavik
Experience*



Alleluia, He is Risen!

As I write this article, Easter is fast approaching and with it the promise of New Life and Resurrection! I pray that you, your family and your Faith & Sharing Community had a joyful Easter celebration and are continuing to rejoice through the fifty days of the Easter Season. Alleluia, He is Risen! (As I look outside at the snow, I'm also praying for the new life of spring flowers to arise from the earth – although the skiers may disagree.)

This issue of Heart-to-Heart is focusing on the Katimavik Experience, a New Life, Resurrection experience for many. The Katimavik is a place for solitude and silence; a place to reconnect with the Risen Lord present in the Eucharist and to bring New Life to one's spiritual self.

The *Practical Guide for Retreats and Other Meetings*, one of our core documents, describes the Katimavik as a "place where we learn to waste time with Jesus"; where "we discover deeper bonds with our brothers and sisters in the retreat and throughout the world"; where we pray "in an attitude of listening, waiting and abandonment."

From this same document we are reminded that the word Katimavik is "an Inuit word which means *meeting place*." Thus the Katimavik is "a personal meeting place with Jesus, a privileged place for adoration and contemplation and the assimilation of the Word received" on the retreat. *The Guide* reminds all who organize a Faith & Sharing Retreat that the environment of the Katimavik should be "a rather small area, where the atmosphere is as warm as possible...simply decorated with a few chairs, cushions, dimmed light...discreet arrangement of natural flowers." In summary the Katimavik is an "unstructured place, rather bare, but inhabited by the Presence." The central focus in the Katimavik is the Eucharist with an open Bible placed near by. "Everything is arranged to draw attention and our eyes to the Eucharist and the Book of the Word, both being illuminated by sufficient lighting." Alleluia, He is Risen and present among us!

The Katimavik then is an integral part of a Faith & Sharing Retreat. It promotes an atmosphere of prayer, silence and solitude lovingly provided through the gracious hospitality and organization of the committee members. Through your efforts you provide a space for the Risen Lord's presence on the retreat to touch every retreatant... and He is grateful!

On a different topic: let us join in prayer for the many people who are preparing for the Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City this June. May God's People attend with open hearts and come to a deeper appreciation of Christ's Presence in their lives. Alleluia, He is Risen!

Pat Mueller
North American Coordinator

Heart-to-Heart

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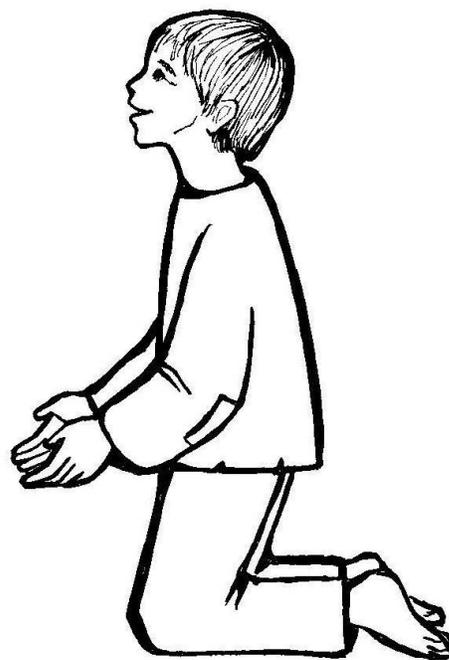
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Themes of upcoming issues

October 2008 (dead line: Sept. 15, 2008) : **Holiness, our call**

April 2009 (dead line: March 15, 2008) : **The Word of God to be Treasured**

Theme : *The Katimavik
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My Faith & Sharing Life History

It is always a great pleasure for me to read very attentively *Heart-to-Heart*. In the last issue, I have been struck by Jean Eudes' testimony on Jeanne Hélie who passed away last year. . Both of them evoked so many souvenirs of the beginning of Faith & Sharing and all that I have lived since 1971. Let me just mention a few of them: the discovery of outstanding personalities, the precious moments spent at the Katimavik with the Lord's unexpected interventions, the Spirit's special call urging me to open a house of prayer and silence for all those who are looking for a permanent Katimavik.

This house of prayer called Béthanie has celebrated its 35 year anniversary. You can easily imagine that it is impossible for me to forget its roots and origins so closely linked with Jean Vanier and Faith & Sharing.

Presently, my health does not allow me to be present with all those who have the chance to gather with these communities and let me avow how I do miss it. However my thanksgivings are countless and that is why I could not help giving in to share with you on this *Heart-to-Heart*.

Thanks to my friend Jean Eudes for recalling Jeanne to my souvenir. Together let us express our gratitude for the spiritual marvels granted to Faith & Sharing and personally, I pray especially for Pat Mueller and Jean Roy.

Gratefully yours,

Louise Léger
Montreal, Region 3

Theme: *The Katimavik
Experience*



An Outcome of the Katimavik

When I was a 6 year old school girl, what I first learnt out of the little catechism, was that God was everywhere. He was, then, present in all my brothers and sisters of all azimuths. Obviously He was a living presence in the holy Bread.

However, it is surely more difficult to love Him intensely in anybody. It spurs me enlarging my heart so that my love would be richer with the Father's love so as to discover in others their qualities sometimes rather hidden. I always wished that this gift of love would gradually spurt out in me.

At the Katimavik, it is, for me, easier to love the Almighty present in the Holy Host. Though I do not really see Him, at least my faith tells me that He is there. In full adoration, I, then, do try to hear what He wants to tell me, what He expects from me and it is quite relaxing and comforting. I really appreciate more and more this experience of the Katimavik even if it is rather on short moments.

The main point I wish to focus on is that in spite of my shortage of love of others, our dear Lord loves us dearly as we are.

Lise Morin
Sherbrooke Faith & Sharing Coordinator, Region 3

*Theme: The Katimavik
Experience*



A Katimavik Experience

Because of the exciting life in which we are involved, I came to realize that silence is very rare and greatly appreciable. Those who have discovered its value have to use a rigorous discipline for deepening it and be determined to pay the price.

If I look back at my first contacts with Chicoutimi's Faith & Sharing community, what always seemed indispensable, is the invitation to spend time at the Katimavik. Those in charge of these monthly gatherings were very keen on these intimate visits to the Lord in spite of the loaded program they had to cope with in order to make this moment possible.

And now I am pleased to share my own experience as I am trying to be faithful to these precious moments where the true Love is waiting for me. Far from me the intention of making you believe that I am favored with visions or interior revelations. Therefore failing to exhibit these saintly manifestations, let me simply tell you what Katimavik has enabled me to achieve. Even if the interior silence is too often far from being a success, my presence at the Lord's feet is however like a bronzing at God's sun. At random, I eventually offer myself at his rays in the most sober outlook as the Holy Host appears to us. And here are some of my thoughts.



"Dear Lord, it is thanks to my tiny bit of faith that I can come to You up to here. I do not forecast what may possibly come out of my presence at Your feet; however I am willing to spent some time with You hoping You will warm up my "pig-skin". Allow me to remain motionless as I used to do when I was young for a good sun tan and enjoyed being bronzed in summer days. As there is no secrets to You about my sensitive skin, useless to advise You of the gentleness required of Your sun rays due to the fact that heart burns are without any doubt harder to heal. Happily I have great faith in your protective creams."

I rejoice in my conviction that even though I do not perceive anything most of the time I have the privilege to take a moment of silence and rest being at Your feet EXPOSING myself, RELAXING, OFFERING myself and bringing with me to Your sacred Heart, all those who are suffering. In due time, the sun will surely pierce through the clouds and warm up our world in great need.

In conclusion, when the climate and circumstances are on my side, I am lucky to experiment some sweet heart to heart moments of wordless intimacy but how so !!!... (no word)

Andrée Vigneault
Chicoutimi, Region 2

*Theme : The Katimavik
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Experiencing His Love

I had my first experience of a Faith and Sharing retreat and the Katimavik two years ago. I couldn't wait to experience more time with Jesus when I would go to the Katimavik. Being there was so like when I sat with the Blessed Sacrament at Adoration. I could step into the Katimavik anytime during the retreat, find a comfortable cushion and be with Jesus.

Most time during my adoration, the first 15 minutes I tell Jesus my thoughts, concerns, I tell Him my hopes, my prayers for myself and for others. Then I allow Jesus to minister to my broken heart.

During one time in the Katimavik, I had a flood of tears come. I never cried so much - I was afraid I would disturb others. I picked up my box of kleenex and left without thanking Jesus. Jesus led me outdoors. I sat down and began to write the following in my journal: "I brought my broken dreams to Jesus because He was my friend but then instead of leaving in peace, I left in tears. I picked up my things and cried: "How can you be so slow?" "My child" he said, "what could I do? You never did let go." I waited for awhile before I went back inside to join the rest. I knew I had experienced Jesus and his unconditional love for me and knew He had more for me.

Now I realize I really wasn't ready to thank him while I was in the Katimavik but now I am. Thank you Jesus, for Faith and Sharing and for experiencing your love for me while I was in the Katimavik.

Jannette Jarvis
Region 1

*Theme: The Katimavik
Experience*



A Very Deep Experience

After having been confronted with a great problem, here I am, in 1983, attending, for the first time, a Faith & Sharing retreat. I am moved by every thing: the very warm welcome, the refine and friendly relationship, the happiness reflected on every one animated by a same love.

I am, then, invited to go for a prayer at the Katimavik with a friend who looks after a seriously handicapped man. Something quite unusual to me: Jesus, in the Holy Eucharist, is at the strategic place and we are all around in a circle. I let Him invade me. All on a sudden, this crippled man in front of me struck me by his radiating face; he seemed to be illuminated: God gratified him with His presence. Very fortunately for me, it seems to overflow on me and the experience I lived at that very moment was remarkable. As a matter of fact, I worshipped this loving Jesus with this man's heart as much as the Bread of Life offered to us so much so that it awoke in me the desire of walking in Jesus' steps.



The Katimavik is one's achievement of being absorbed by our Creator's love. It is also happening to me when I have the chance of admiring the marvels in the nature; I am thrilled at everything and it leads me to gratitude. My grandchild has, for me, a certain affinity with the Katimavik and all grandmothers surely agree with me when enjoying the full trust, the complete surrender and the joy that is gushing out of a grandchild's attitude towards us; it invites us to imitate them.

André Sève wrote: "*Search for the depths of the interior field when spaces are restricted and the encounters are limited*". I am very grateful to Faith & Sharing for all that it has brought in my life. God's love is infinite. He will never miss an encounter with us when He detects a wee bit of such a wish within us.

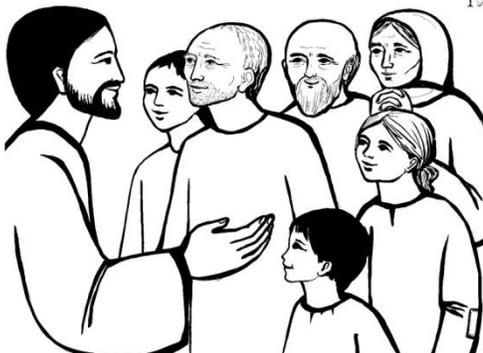
Patricia Côté
Quebec, Region 2

*Theme: The Katimavik
Experience*



Katimavik - The Meeting Place

At each Faith and Sharing retreat, I look forward to the time I will be able to spend in the Katimavik - the meeting place. For myself, the tiny, intimate place set apart for personal prayer, reflection and devotion is at the heart of the Faith and Sharing retreat. It is the place for us to "come apart" and meet Jesus - our Lord, our Saviour, our Brother, our Friend, our Beloved.



For me, the Faith and Sharing retreat is the "meeting place" for me to reconnect with all those people, who each year, come together to pray, share, sing, laugh, listen, cry and just "be" with one another. Friends who I do not see except on a Faith and Sharing retreat travel many miles to gather together and spend quality time together. So it is also in the Katimavik.

As I spend time in prayer in the Katimavik, I spend time alone, apart with Jesus and during these special times of prayer I feel surrounded by those who have gone before us -

those friends and loved ones who are no longer with us physically and also those friends who may still be alive but for some reason can't be at that particular retreat. Their presence is so powerfully felt within me as I sit in silence before the Blessed Sacrament. Jesus draws me to himself and in that drawing He draws me closer and closer to my brothers and sisters.

Several years ago a dear friend moved thousands of miles away from me and before she left she said: "Remember, I'm only a heartbeat away". When we are connected through our love of Jesus, we are truly only a heartbeat away from all those we love and the Katimavik helps me to feel connected - with one hand in the hand of Jesus and the other in the hands of my brothers and sisters.

Marilyn Moore
Saint John (New Brunswick), Region1

*Theme : The Katimavik
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For me, The Katimavik is...

... the purest love we receive from the Lord. (anonymous)

... to keep silent and listen to Jesus . It is a "Heart to Heart" with Jesus. It is a sacred place where I meet Jesus. (Francoise A.)

... a face to face with Jesus. Moments spent in intimacy, in adoration, in thanksgivings, in praise and amendment. I bring the whole world to Jesus with all its needs and sufferings so that the kingdom of God comes. (Laurette B.)

... to adore the Lord present in the Holy Eucharist. (Rose B.)

... Worship is to love Jesus extremely! Jesus said: "*Whoever sees me, sees the Father*". Jesus adored his Father all along his life and at the Katimavik I feel invited to imitate Him and thus, I receive the Holy Spirit in my daily life. (Lise B.)



... a resting place in the Lord for worshipping Him and begging forgiveness and praying for those dear to me. (Pauline C.)

... a very resourceful halt with Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist leading me to deep listening, to contemplation and to adoration. I feel like the Samaritan at Jacob's well and hear the cry of Jesus: "I am thirsty ". I, then, bring Him the whole of humanity. (Madeleine C.)

... a place where I can ask the Lord everything that I want. He answers me in His own way and when I depart from Him, my heart is peaceful. (Maria C.)

... a place where I go to sleep! However I know Jesus is there and He will cure me of any wounds. (Henriette D.)

,,, Jesus' presence among us strengthens our faith and love. It is Jesus looking at us with the hope that we will pray to Him. (Jean-Marie D.)

... being in God's presence. It brings me great physical and moral comfort. It is as though I am chatting with the greatest friend with whom I can rejoice. (Suzanne G.)

... a search of Jesus' presence in me, that dear Jesus whom I adore. (Rose-Marie H.)

... a personal encounter with my beloved. (Pierrette J.)

... meeting God Daddy with his unbelievable love for me. (Claire L.)

... Jesus' loving presence always at hand. (Jacquelin L.)

... a "Heart to Heart" quiet place with Jesus. (Micheline L.)

... where I can go "feed myself" to be able to keep going for what is ahead of me. (Imelda L.)

... a place of worship where I can ponder at random and relieve my heart in front of the Holy and Sacred Lord who has his master's degree in the philosophy of life and therefore can give us sound advices for living in peace and love. (Yvon M.)

... a silent and prayerful place. While praying we can take a distance from our problems and think of our projects. (Louise M.)

... being in the presence of our Lord, to adore Him, to thank Him and pray for sinners (including myself) and for my parents, relatives, friends, benefactors, and all the deceased waiting for their entry into heaven. It is also praying Mary that she helps us to love her divine Son more intensely. (Ghyslaine N.)

... **very important**: it brings me peace, joy and life. (Jeannette P.)

... an encounter with the One I love and who loves me who feeds me and strengthens me so that I can be helpful to others by my presence, my smile or any kindness every day. (Maude R.)

... a place to confide in God. (Lucille R.)



Quebec City community
Region 2

Theme: *The Katimavik
Experience*



To Pray as we Breathe (Lk 11, 1-13)

*“You loved the Father
And you knew how to talk with Him
It is written in the prayer that
We have inherited from your heart”*

(Song: Mannick's text)

The apostles often observed Jesus in prayer. Any time, anywhere, outside the temple, in the synagogue, in the desert, on the lake shore, in wheat fields, under the olive trees of Gethsemani. For us from Faith & Sharing, the most simple room can become the Katimavik of Jesus as, in fact, He is everywhere. His disciples looked at him with admiration and His prayer gave them the desire to pray like Him: "Lord, teach us to pray".

To pray like Jesus, as a model, it means that prayer becomes an encounter, an evidence of trust, a communion of true love with the Father... We can just try to figure out how intimate was the dialogue taking place according to daily events. He also kept silent totally surrendered to his Father's will.

As Jesus and with Him, we can say or dare say: "Our Father....." And Jesus alone is our leader "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one goes to the Father except by me". (John 14, 6) Whether we are aware of it, like Christians, or whether we ignore it as so many men and women that do not know Him, it is He, Jesus who opens the way to the Father.

To pray as Jesus did means calling God as He did: "Abba, Daddy." Two quite simple syllables which children murmur, by raising their glance to the loved one which they call "Dad"! "God - dad"!.. Incredible intimacy towards the Creator of all things, the sovereign Master... "God - dad"!.. Childish encounter from the smallest with the greatest supreme Being... Encounter raising up the lowest to the highest state of the Almighty... Encounter empowering the weakest to the most powerful. Greeting of one by the other in the intimacy of two beings which have complete trust in one another

To pray as Jesus prayed is to come to God not so that He removes our sorrows and burdens or so that He carries them in our place, but so that we find in our sufferings, peace, rest and joy knowing He is with us, quite close. Thanks to His infinite patience, love and humble of heart He helps us to discover the boundless love and mercy He has poured on us during our whole life long, at all times, to our own cross.

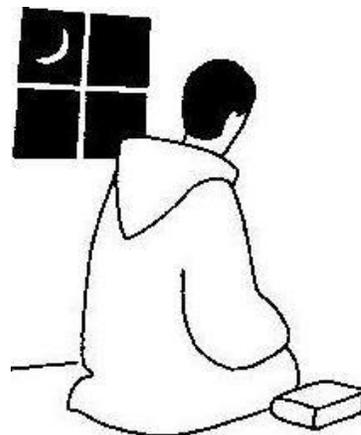
To pray God at the rhythm of our breathing is to pray in Jesus and like Jesus saying: 'Abba, Daddy' It is rather demanding as it involves to let Him be our teacher up to the achievement of becoming through Him, with Him and in Him a PRAYER. Let us stand in his presence with all the transparency of a child's heart with our hands lifted up straight towards Him every day. Let Him live in us very closely to our hearts as though both hearts breathe in one beat. Look at him very attentively for a long time and let Him look at us so that the brightness of His light enlightens all our being and irradiates His face. Believe desperately that He answers our prayers and that he always fulfills them even sometimes above our expectation. Because beyond our superficial desires, the deepest desire for our human heart is God's thirst as if we were suspended from His breath... Pray as one breathes...

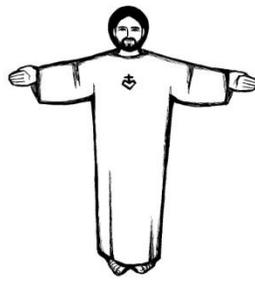


Thus, the Katimavik at Faith & Sharing is highly favourable to introduce us at "Our Father's school" where Jesus is waiting for us in that discreet and quiet place where He is in the Holy Eucharist. In a Heart to Heart with Him, may He gradually transform our heart into a portative Katimavik that can spread light and His presence everywhere on our way.

Laurette Lepage
Quebec, region 2

The Katimavik Experience





Jesus was open-hearted with everybody

While on earth,
My dear Lord Jesus
You gave me countless evidences
Proving that your heart
Was largely open to everybody.

With great kindness and care
You cured the sick who were running after you
You comforted the widow in tears
You welcomed with tenderness a child
As well as a sinner who bashfully approached you.

With your merciful heart
You have forgiven the adulteress
Recommending her to stop sinning.
Zacheus, at your contact, quickly shifted
From a robber to a honest man.
You forgave Peter's denial
And your disciples who abandoned you.

Thank you Jesus
For your coming to teach me
How to forgive
If I want to be forgiven.

Through your Almighty Spirit
Make me attentive to others' sufferings
Be a light on the way.
You have showed me leading to God our Father.

Lord , I plead with you:

**Open my heart
to all those
who cross my path.
Amen**

Carmen Dallaire
Chicoutimi, Region 3

Faith and Sharing: 40 years at Marylake

This August at Marylake we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the wonderful gift of Faith and Sharing. In 1968 the first Faith and Sharing retreat was given at Marylake in King City north of Toronto by Jean Vanier.

This year the Toronto group will host the Faith and Sharing Retreat for the fortieth year and welcome friends from as far away as North Bay Ontario and Cleveland Ohio. We will ask retreatants both past and present to submit their reflections and experiences of Faith and Sharing in writing. These will be shared at our retreat in August. Also we will collect photographs from past retreats and make an album for all to see and remember precious friends from previous years.

We have journeyed with one another and shared our struggles and joys knowing always that Jesus was walking with us. There have been so many wonderful friendships built over the years and many miracles at Marylake. We will truly have a "family reunion".

Each year when we enter the gates of Marylake and are greeted by the long line of trees on both sides of the road that leads into the property, there is a special warmth in our hearts. It's like coming home.

Patrick Treacy
Toronto, Region 4

Remembering

My association with Faith and Sharing retreats began in 1986. Father Ken Decker, now superior-general of the Basilian order, used to visit me occasionally. One day, he announced that he was giving the Faith and Sharing retreat at Marylake that summer and that I was going to attend! I looked at him in amazement. I was in a wheelchair, and I needed attendant care. He said: "I know what you are thinking. However, I have it all arranged. I am driving you to the retreat, and I have asked Sister Claudia, a friend of ours, to take care of you!" How could I refuse such an offer!

I had heard of Faith and Sharing retreats, but this was my first introduction to them. I felt very much at home, as there were others in wheelchairs. The surroundings at Marylake are beautiful, very relaxing, and conducive to prayer. This first retreat was the beginning of many more retreats which I attended over the years. I was fortunate to have an attendant accompany me over the years. I looked forward to this week every year, as a time to refresh my body and to rejuvenate my spiritual life. I haven't been able to attend for the last few years, due to needing more care.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate all the Faith and Sharing committees on their 40th anniversary. May they continue this wonderful apostolate, begun by Jean Vanier, of bringing Christ's love, hope, and compassion to those who are most in need.

Patricia Walsh
Region 4

Death of Jeanne Hélie and Word from Jean Vanier

Jeanne Hélie was a participant of Faith and Sharing from the beginning. She worked for 20 years without any salary in the Foyer de Charité, a community devoted to the poorest of the poor, severely handicapped people. She had a beautiful voice which called people to prayer and Jean Vanier used to ask her to accompany him on many retreats because of her gift. I advised Jean of her death. Here is his answer, which I want to share with you:

November 20, 2007
L'ARCHE

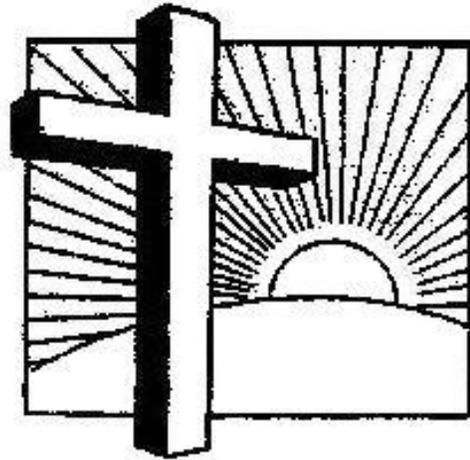
*Love to you Mary
and thank you for your letter,
the cassette of Jeanne Hélie
and the photos.*

*It is good to be in communion
with those who have left us and all
those who are still working in the Vine
of the Lord.
So thank you.*

*May Jesus keep you, enfold you in His love
and all those who are in Faith and Sharing.
Do give my love to all.*

*Peace in Jesus
Jean*

Mary Munroe
Montreal, Region 3



North American Committee

The next meeting of the North American Committee is scheduled for Friday, May 2nd through Sunday, May 4th in Montreal. During this time we will also hold the Annual General Assembly meeting. Please pray for your NAC as we come together in prayer to give direction to Faith & Sharing. If we can be of service to you, please let us know.

Pat Mueller
Jean Roy
Raymonde Doucet
Hélène Babin-Otabe
Michel Last
Patrick Treacy
André Ruel
Chris Alvarado
Jacques Pelletier

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