

Spring Issue 2004

Companions of the Cross



Inside
Family Formation
Healing Ministry



A FIRE Rally is coming to Ottawa!

Sat. Nov. 6th, 2004 Tudor Hall

Sponsored by the Companions of the Cross



Sr. Ann Shields



Ralph Martin



Peter Herbeck



Fr. Michael Scanlan

More Info and a Complete Ottawa FIRE Rally Brochure will appear in our August newsletter.

Includes Mass with Archbishop Marcel Gervais!

Also – Special Saturday Evening Youth Fest Event with Peter Herbeck.

Mark your calendars now! Don't miss this great Catholic rally.

Pray that many lives will be touched by the Fire of God's Love
and the Power of the Holy Spirit!

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Companions of the Cross



FEATURE

by Fr. Bob Bedard

Awakening

There have been many suggestions over the years as to what being baptized with the Holy Spirit actually means.

There is certainly no secret that the phrase in question is clearly presented in the New Testament. John the Baptist is quoted by all four of the gospel writers that the one coming after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John baptized with water as a sign of a person's repentance for the forgiveness of sin. But Jesus, the one who came after, would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus himself uses the phrase. Telling his disciples to wait in the city he said: "*Not many days hence, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit*" (Ac 1:5).

I recall no catechism about it as I was growing up and attending Catholic schools for 15 years from grade one to the end of my college program. I graduated with a B.A. degree and headed for theology in the seminary. There was no mention of it there either during the four years. When I finished theology, I was ordained a priest. I was 25 years old. For my first 15 years as a priest, although I read a good bit of pastoral theology, the silence about it continued.

It was only around 1970, with the advent of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, that I began to read and hear about being baptized with the Holy Spirit. I actually met and spoke to a fair number of people who said they had received this peculiar gift. In fact, most of these said it had had a profound effect on their lives, even to changing their lives altogether.

There were enough people testifying that measured up to my standards of

credibility to set me on a tentative course of investigation. I took very hesitant steps, having many misgivings along the way. The journey took eight months. I was a slow learner.

I was "prayed over" by a few people as I invited Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour, asking him at the same time to baptize me with the Holy Spirit. Within hours, I had to admit that the effect upon me was indeed profound. In fact, it changed my life. That was 1975.

My theology had done a quick 180-degree turn. It was like a revolution in my mind. My approach to preaching and teaching was completely overhauled. I realized my former stand – that the Church had to make significant accommodations to the world's ever-evolving values – was totally misguided. I knew now that an essential part of the Church's mission involved challenging the world and standing strong with the Lord's gospel as faithfully preserved from the beginning by the teaching office of the Catholic Church.

What answer can we give to the many who ask about what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? I've read many descriptions. It's an "outpouring" some have said. An "in-filling", others have maintained. Still others have connected it with the Sacrament of Confirmation, or a deepening of the Sacrament of Baptism. There are others.

I have never worried about defining it. I have been content to live it out and to promote it. But I guess, if we're concerned about speeding along the catechesis, we probably should contribute to it as best we can.

So... my two cents worth follows. For the last couple of years, I have been calling the baptism of the Holy Spirit a particular grace from God, a grace that brings a

spiritual awakening. And the awakening admits to degrees of intensity.

My conviction is that the experience is intended by God to be normative to the Christian life. We must, therefore, make it a high priority in our ministry.

The grace is dispensed by the Lord himself. The Holy Spirit Seminar we're familiar with is definitely a good vehicle for its reception. But I believe there are others. Whenever people who are in the state of grace open the door inviting Jesus into their hearts and lives, who ask him for the full presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and who ask to be baptized with the same Spirit, will receive the grace.

I believe further that the grace can be received, or renewed, more than once.

It is not a sacrament nor is it particularly connected with any of the sacraments, but it is a powerful grace from God. It produces an awareness of spiritual reality, gives new eyes to see what God is doing, and new ears (as it were) to hear what he is saying.

And, it can bring much more: an encounter with the risen and living Christ, a relish for prayer, a keen interest in reading and understanding of the Bible, a desire to praise God, awareness of spiritual warfare, and an eagerness to join in the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

This is what we look to when we evangelize – bringing people into the experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, the spiritual awakening that the Lord wants all his people to have and to live by. ☮

Fr. Bob Bedard's ministry has included teaching high school, full-time renewal work and pastoring St. Mary's parish in Ottawa.

FEATURE



Family Formation Happening at St. Mary's Parish

Family Formation Program monthly gathering at St. Mary's

The Family Formation program was begun in St. Mary's parish in Ottawa two years ago. It is based on the program originally developed by St. Paul's parish in Ham Lake, Minnesota. Here is what the St. Paul's parish web site says about its program: "Family Formation is the religious education program developed at the Church of Saint Paul for families with children aged 3, through sixth grade, offering a variety of opportunities for parents to get involved with and pass on the Catholic Faith to their children. Our mission is to equip parents to pass on a well-formed faith to their children. Instead of setting up the teachers of our youth in competition with the home, we set them up as the primary supporters of the home. Our goal is to have at least one full-time youth minister in every home (the parents, of course). At the monthly parents' sessions, the parents hear the presentation on the theme for the month. They also receive the lessons for the following three weeks. We go through the packets with them, explaining some of the details of the upcoming lessons and encouraging the parents. We ask that parents and children devote a minimum of one hour a week to home lessons. We have found that the Family Formation Program soon becomes a way of life. As parents assume

their role as the primary teachers of their children, they are challenged to "walk the talk" and live their faith. Pope John Paul II said, "Families, become who you are." Family Formation helps families become the domestic churches they are called to be.

The Family Formation Program began at St. Mary's two years ago. There are currently 22 families involved, with 48 children involved in classes and 8 children in the nursery group. It originally began at St. Mary's after Fr. Charles paid a visit to St. Paul's parish in Ham Lake, where he saw the program in action and decided to bring it home here to Ottawa. You can obtain further information about the program at St. Mary's by contacting Johanne Brady, the Coordinator at 837-7688. You can learn more about the Family Formation Program from the web site of St. Paul's parish in Ham Lake, Minnesota: <http://www.churchofsaintpaul.com/content/formation/html/ffhome.shtml>

FAMILY FORMATION TESTIMONIES

1) The Family Formation program is a wonderful assistance in instructing our children in the faith. While there is an abundance of resources and family devotionals available, what we truly appreciate about Family Formation is its solid rooting in the Catholic faith. It follows the liturgical year and is very dedicated to the sacramental aspect of the Roman Catholic Church. It also covers the lives of saints, the Rosary, the Commandments and reacquaints us with some of the traditional prayers of the Church, such as the Angelus and the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. As parents of 4 young children (ages 3-8), one of the practical aspects of the Program that we really appreciate, is that everything needed for the home instruction comes ready to use. The home lessons help us to discipline ourselves to set a special time aside each week. We can really see our family's faith life growing as we spend this time together. In addition, the monthly meetings give the children an opportunity to get to know

Equipping
parents to pass
on their Catholic
faith to their
children.

other children from the parish who attend different schools. Being with these other families makes our faith a more “normal” thing in our lives. We are not alone in our faith walk. “Family Formation helps us to learn more about Jesus...and the games are fun!” (Tommy, age 8). “I really like doing my First Reconciliation lessons at home with Daddy” (Rachel, age 7).

- *Joe and Jacque Farah & Family*

2) Our home-schooling family has found the Family Formation program, provided at St. Marys, to be a welcome addition to the catechetical formation we are currently providing our children. It is great that the family formation materials give the husband a key role in the delivery of the lessons. Our seven-year-old daughter, Monique, enjoyed the memory verses, artwork, songs, games, photos, and the desserts sometimes provided at the end of class. She found that the teachers were kind and fun. She has found that the exercises help her to learn more about Jesus and to prepare for her 1st Communion. Our ten-year-old son, Matthew, also enjoyed learning the memory verses, singing songs, and being with his peers in a Christian setting. He really liked the stories of the Pauline family, and how they would use fun activities to impart the message of each Sunday’s readings. The Family Formation program has provided our family an opportunity to spend more quality time together. It has also been good to take the program with other



Fr. Charles Orchard, St. Mary’s Pastor

parishioners. This has fostered a sense of community since we all are participating in a common program. As well, our children have stayed motivated by seeing other parish families take part in the program.

- *Mike & Suzanne Staples & Family*

3) The Family Formation program is a good program because it exposes the children to the richness of their faith and is very thorough. There are a lot of activities that enrich the teaching aspect. Our children like the fact that they learn about God and if they know their bible verse, they get a holy card. They like the colouring! We like the fact that the teachings follow the liturgical calendar. The adults also learn quite a bit. Father Charles has just the right way of teaching the adults

and making it interesting for us. I don’t think that there is a better way to learn our faith in a family context. It’s good to practice our faith with members of our community outside of the Sunday liturgy.

- *The Duval Family*



André and Mary Beth Pion presenting a lesson.

4) Having come from a non-Catholic background I deeply appreciate Family Formation with its Catholic teachings. These lessons give me the catechetical material I need to share with my family and it strengthens my own faith. Anna listens to me when I read the lesson even when she pretends not to. The material sparks discussion between me and the kids or between the kids themselves. I also appreciate the prayers and Bible verses (which must be memorized). We have a great 2000-year-old heritage.

- *M.E. Neppel*

5) This is our family’s second year in Family Formation and we continue to love the unity that it brings to us as a family. Our children, Madeleine (5), Ethan (almost 4), and Sophia (1) ask to work on our Family Formation “homework” more than once a week. Our eldest, when asked why she enjoys the program, replied that she loves to learn things about Jesus, likes to work on the crafts, and enjoys having the Bible read to her class when we attend meetings once a month. Madeleine has retained amazing quantities of information about our faith through this program and learns her memory verses with enthusiasm and great speed. Clearly Family Formation is both simply and perfectly designed for teaching, catechesis, and Bible study for a family with young children. Ethan says he loves to go to the monthly gatherings because he enjoys playing with the other children and “because I learn to talk to God”. His teachers have told us that he works well with other children and answers many questions. As his parents, we are thrilled to see him so enthusiastic to learn more about Jesus and the Bible, especially because we didn’t know whether, at Ethan’s age (almost 4), he would glean very much from the teachings. Adrian and I do have to simplify many ideas as we present them to the family and yet at the same time, we ourselves learn more at each family gathering and at the monthly meetings. Adrian and I have found Family Formation to be beautifully set up to benefit people of all ages. As we drive to

Continued on page 4

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Mass on Sundays, we review the Pauline family's story and read the Gospel for the day. This has helped us to focus on Sunday Mass even when we may be kept busy with our youngest. We have enjoyed and learned a great deal from Father Charles' and Fr. Mark's teachings and feel privileged and blessed to have them share their gifts and knowledge with us. Although time for socializing before and after gatherings is limited, it has afforded us precious opportunities anyways to meet the wonderful Catholic couples who

love their faith and inspire us in our faith journey.

- *Adrian & Adele Pierce & Family*

6) Family Formation has helped our children to learn more about and love the saints in heaven. In November, after the saints were talked about during the sessions, our four-year old daughter wanted to sing a litany of the saints. Each night, at bedtime prayers, we would begin with all the saints our family members were

named after, then the other saints' names, then Mary and the angels. Our ten-year-old daughter began looking up other, lesser-known-to-us saints, who were then added to the list. Needless to say, bedtime prayer became quite extended, but what a joy it was knowing all those saints in heaven were interceding for our family and that our children were going to sleep with such a song in their hearts!

- *André & Mary Beth Pion & Family* ☺



*Top: The Brine Family working with the program
Right: Children learning about the faith*



You are Invited to Attend the Companions of the Cross 3rd Annual
ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY BANQUET & FUNDRAISER

Fr. Francis Donnelly

Fr. Roger Vandenaeker

Fr. Allan MacDonald

Fr. George Sammut



Thursday, May 13th at Capone's Banquet Hall

831 Industrial Avenue, Ottawa

6:00 p.m. Reception (cash bar) - 6:30 p.m. Dinner (includes wine)

Tickets \$35.00 per person

Available by calling the Office at [613] 728-3175

or Mary Lauzon at [613] 297-0899

We wish to honour all the priests in our community who are celebrating an anniversary of ordination in any multiple of five. The banquet is a festive and fun way to recognize the dedication with which these men have served the Church. Our honourees will also be attending our Foundation Day Mass on Friday, May 7th at St. Mary's church in Ottawa (7:30 p.m.). Everyone is welcome to pray and celebrate with these men on this occasion. A reception will follow in the parish hall.

Please be aware that the banquet on May 13th is also a fundraising event. In lieu of gifts for the honourees, a free will offering to support the work of the community will be collected after dinner.

Note: the \$35 ticket for the dinner covers the cost of the meal itself and the hall rental.

- Free 'Vision of St. John Bosco' Print to all Attendees!
- * Fabulous Door Prizes!
- Tribute/Roast of all Honourees!
- * Other fantastic Entertainment - including Fr. Bob singing!

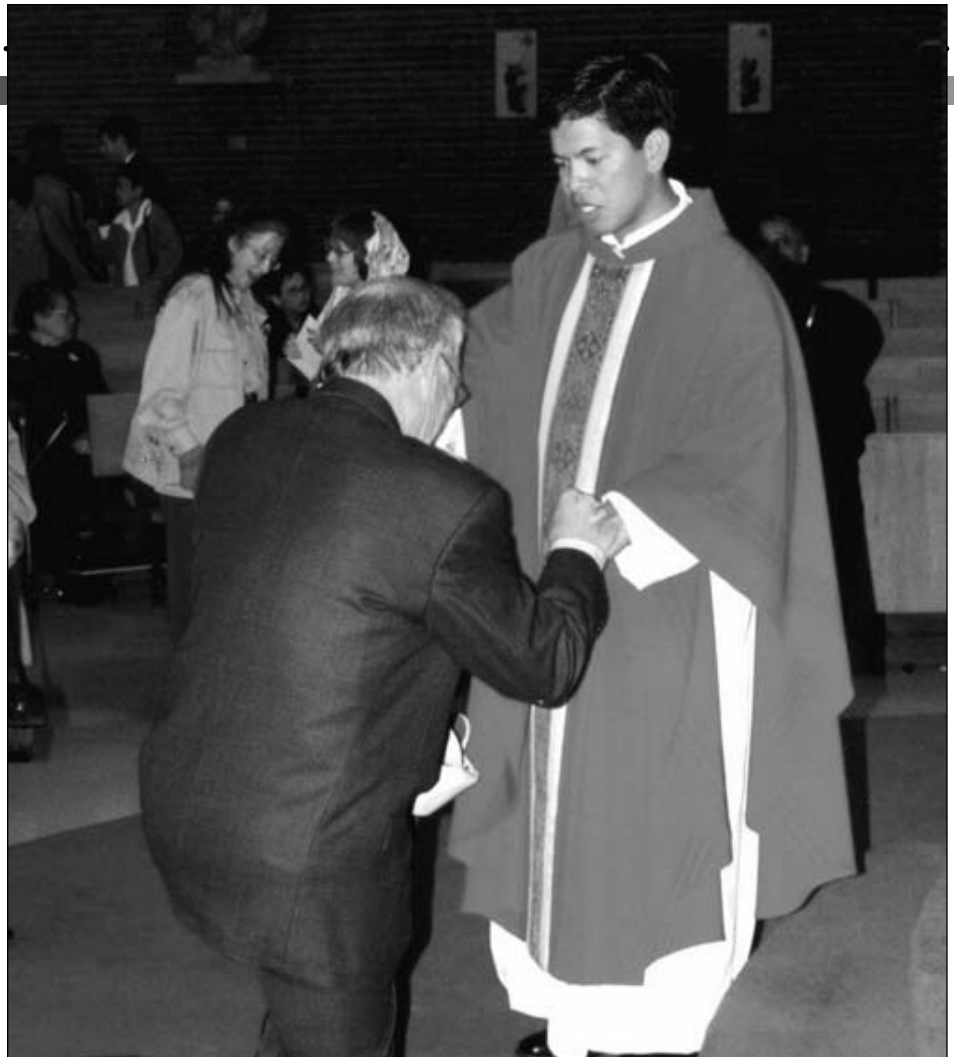
Hope to See You There!

Healing Ministry in the Church Today

by Fr. Peter Coughlin

What is the healing ministry? No one really doubts the need for healing in their own life or in the lives of others. Today, healing is a marketable product as seen in the rising trend of health food stores, natural medicine, the use of herbs, organically grown foods, and the ever-increasing use of drugs. Society is focused on eradicating disease of all kinds. Even on television, products are marketed and healing through the Divine is offered by television evangelists. Healing is important and, indeed, even necessary, if life is to be lived free of pain, infirmity and disease.

Medical science is continually developing new methods to combat disease and there is a strong reliance on surgery and drugs to deal with the presenting problem. Every person I know has a need for healing in some way, whether of mind or body, emotions or spirit, in their relationships or life circumstances. It is my experience that many people try many different ways or means offered to find peace, balance, wholeness in their lives. And many of these same people do not recognize that they can receive healing, wholeness, peace, freedom, right balance from Jesus Christ who continues His healing ministry in the Church today.



Fr. Fernando Suarez engaged in healing prayer.

Healing is real and is attainable. A doctor can treat but only God can heal. God heals in the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we read the Bible, especially the Gospels and The Acts of the Apostles, we see Jesus as The Healer who sets people free, makes them whole, restores them to life, and hands on to His apostles and the disciples the same authority and power of the Spirit to do the same and even greater works than He did.

Jesus is the Man of the Spirit, filled to the fullest measure with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through whom Jesus lived, died and rose again, as He carried on His ministry of healing and setting people free. So often we can tend to focus on the teaching and preaching of Jesus but that was only part of His ministry. Primarily, He was a healer who broke the devil's power: "God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with

him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil" (Ac 10:38).

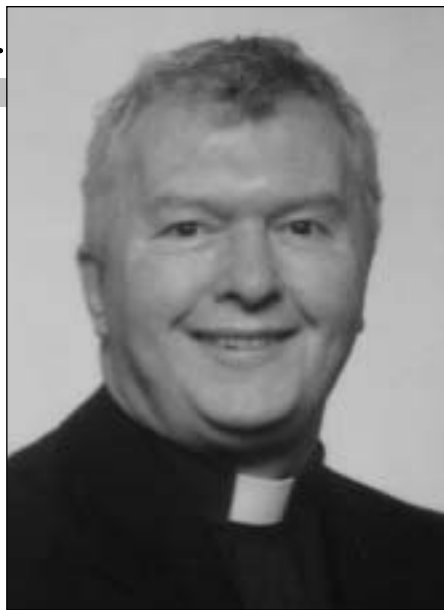
The Church by the power of the Holy Spirit carries on the ministry of healing through the administration of the sacraments, especially the Anointing of the Sick, and through the charisms of the Holy Spirit. Bishops share with priests the privilege and responsibility of bringing Jesus to the people. This is done by preaching, teaching and example, but also through the sacraments, moments of encounter with the Risen Jesus which are meant to focus, change, transform and renew those who receive them. Pastoral care of the people involves establishing them as sons and daughters of the Father, brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus and as companions of the Holy Spirit who carries on the mission of Jesus to renew all of creation. Through initiation into the Church as disciples of Jesus filled with

the Spirit we do the same works to bring healing and wholeness, forgiveness and peace.

Called to be followers of Jesus, we are formed as disciples who exercise the charisms in ministry of service. The charisms are the passing manifestations of the Spirit in the moment to meet specific needs, to bring miracle, healing, freedom, wisdom, knowledge, discernment, blessing and encouragement, the revelation of the Lord's word, mind and heart, to a given situation or circumstance. To minister in the power of the Spirit is a normal part of Christian living. The Church is both charismatic and institutional, the one not able to exist without the other. The Spirit is alive and active within the Church or else the institution would be dead. The Spirit is the very soul of the Church enlivening and ministering through its members. The Spirit's purpose is to make holy the Church and the members of the Church as the Spirit reveals Jesus who glorifies the Father.

Healing involves loving and forgiving. Healing is wholeness of the total person and his environment, deliverance from demonic power and influence, forgiveness of sin and life from death. Healing is sharing God's abundance with the oppressed poor. Healing is growing in community, in the Kingdom of God. Healing, wholeness and holiness are touching, receiving God's mercy. It is divine love being ministered. Healing is embracing salvation, applying the merits of the cross to pain and suffering. Healing is real! It happens! God's desire is for our blessing, strengthening, wholeness and holiness. Through faith and prayer God's will is revealed and embraced, hearts are turned towards the Lord and the presence and power of the Spirit are manifested to meet us in our daily needs to be forgiven, restored and brought into right order and relationship so that the peace and holiness of the Lord Jesus fills our lives.

Down through the centuries divine healing has been approached in different ways by different people. One way would be



Fr. Peter Coughlin

confrontational, breaking the hold of the evil one over a person to set them free and restore them. Another is intercessory, appealing directly to the Lord or through one of the saints or a holy person that healing may take place. Another is incubational in which a person stays and prays in a shrine or a retreat centre until they receive healing. The reliquial method would be to use relics of the saints as touchstones to be in direct contact with a saint or holy person who has died, expecting that the prayer to the person would be effective. A revelational approach is one in which a person receives from the Lord a revelation of the healing taking place and speaks it to the person or persons who then receive the anointing touch of God upon their lives and so healing takes place. The soteriological approach is to call and invite people to embrace the cross to crucify their sinful passions and desires, receiving salvation, the healing effect of salvation won for us by Jesus Christ through His death and rising from the dead.

Divine healing is not faith healing. Healing does not depend solely on having enough faith to be healed. Healing involves the will of God, a climate of faith and readiness to receive. Today the preaching of healing and deliverance creates a climate that awakens faith and expectancy that God does and will give healing. So often the biggest difficulty in receiving healing is for the person to take

their eyes off the problem or the infirmity and give the Lord full attention and permission to do the healing needed. It really is a matter of asking and receiving. That may well require giving forgiveness, having a forgiving heart and being free from sin and negativity, having one's heart open to receiving God's gift as one asks in the person of Jesus. Trusting in God's power and establishing a relationship with Jesus, people open themselves to whatever the Lord in His compassion and power would do for them. In a lived relationship with Jesus, healings occur to lead to or strengthen that relationship.

Throughout Church history God has intervened to bring restoration to health by His direct intervention. Divine healing continues today as it did when Jesus ministered healing in Galilee wherever He traveled. Jesus never ministered healing in one particular way nor did He give any particular formula or prayer to use to bring about healing. Jesus is the healer and how it is accomplished is a mystery. Healing is all about God's unconditional and unending love freely given to whomever He chooses. Divine healing takes place in a person's experience, but it is God who brings it about through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of healing belongs to the one who receives healing from Jesus. The ministry of healing is exercised by whomever the Holy Spirit uses for the manifestation of His presence and power. A person who is willing, says "yes" to being empowered for ministry and exercises the courage needed to act in a particular need can be said to have the ministry of healing when their prayers are regularly answered. A person may be used to bring healing once or countless times. One really knows they have a ministry of healing when people keep knocking on the door for them to pray for healing. In my own life I have been exercising a healing ministry for over thirty years.

Some people are specialists when it comes to prayer for healing, for example, being effective in prayer for back prob-



lems or with cancer patients, for healing of memories of soul-spirit hurts, in healing of open wounds or relationship difficulties. For myself, I consider myself more of a general practitioner in that I pray for everything and often see amazing healings or miracles take place. All people are to pray for healing for self and others but some are gifted with an extraordinary ministry of healing to the sick.

There are many questions that surround the healing ministry. Does everyone get healed? I firmly believe that healing occurs every time we pray for it, but it may not be the healing for which we specifically ask. The Lord knows what is for our greatest good and blessing. For example, we might pray for a specific physical healing and the healing received is the absence of fear or anxiety, an infilling of peace, or a different physical need may be met. The Lord reveals His presence and power in order to deepen our relationship with Him, form in us holiness, strengthen our faith or simply to delight our spirits-filling us with joy and greater love for Him.

Healing may happen immediately or it may come slowly by stages. All healing is from Jesus and He knows the best way for us to grow strong in Him. We marvel when pain instantly disappears, when a person has free movement, hearing or sight restored, the heart changed or transformed. Instant healings help to increase the sense of expectancy in faith for other healings to be received.

Sickness and death come about in the lives of all of us because of the effects of the original sin of our first parents. That does not mean that an individual sickness is caused by the person's own sin or the sin of their parents. Sickness and death are part of the human condition because of our fallen human nature. There are good and holy people who suffer unrelieved sickness, poor health, weakness, and do not get well. This is part of the mystery of divine healing and God's will and purpose. It may be that the infirmity keeps the person in relationship with the Lord or deepens the relationship. Their

situation may bring faith to others and be a testimony as to how a Christian deals with suffering through faith and dependence on the Lord.

I remember a young man of twenty-seven dying of cancer who was a great example to all on the hospital floor though he was not a church-goer. When people asked or lamented how this could happen to him, he responded, "Why not me?" In another situation I was asked to see a man with whom I had prayed fourteen years before. Unknown to me he was instantly healed of brain cancer when I had prayed with him. Fourteen years later I was told this. Cancer had recurred and I prayed with him again. I knew when I prayed that he would die in two weeks time. However, the healing that took place this time was in his spirit. He forgave and reconciled with his brothers and his sons and had a wondrous and peaceful death with his family and both parish priests at his bedside. What he had not made right the first time he received healing, he accomplished before his death, dying a happy man ready to meet the Lord. In another situation I prayed with a woman in great pain after surgery for cancer of the spine. She had also wrenched her knee and pulled a muscle in the opposite thigh and

needed a lot of help to move about. When I prayed with her, her knee was healed instantly and all the pain disappeared. She remained pain-free until two days before her death several weeks later when she died happily and at peace.

Believers don't always get well. Their ministry is often found in their witness of how to live in the midst of sickness and suffering. And healing accompanies their faith as their spirits are made whole and holiness becomes more and more evident in them.

Medicine, too, is God's gift and doctors and pharmacists work for healing in the lives of the people they serve. When the Lord heals, it is good to seek confirmation from the doctor and let the doctor terminate the medication that has been prescribed. When a person receives divine healing, they know they have been touched by God, set free and healed, made new in the wonder of divine love. What is the healing ministry? It is God's love made real, tangible through the Lord's direct or indirect ministry as He intervenes to make new, renew and transform the circumstance of His beloved people.

The above was taken from Chapter One of Fr. Peter Coughlin's *The Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ in the Church Today* (Hamilton, ON: C.C.S.O. Bread of Life Renewal Centre, 2003). Reprinted with permission.

To order a copy of this book please visit the Bread of Life website at:

<http://www.thebreadoflife.ca/items.htm>.

Other chapters are titled:

- 2) Prayer for Healing;
- 3) Scriptural Foundations;
- 4) Healing Through the Centuries;
- 5) Sacraments of Healing;
- 6) Pastoral Applications;
- 7) From Experience;
- 8) Practical Procedures;
- 9) Possible Dangers, Abuses, Aberrations; &
- 10) The Challenge and Place of Healing in Evangelization Today.

Healing Testimonies From Fr. Fernando Suarez's Ministry

Fr. Fernando Suarez of the Companions of the Cross is one of those people Fr. Peter Coughlin mentions in the previous article, who have a particular "charism" for healing. Many people have been blessed by his ministry. Below are a few witnesses from people who attest to this fact. Fr. Fernando frequently conducts "Healing Masses" in and around Toronto, Ottawa, and other locales. For instance, he is scheduled to be at St. Maurice parish in Ottawa on Monday, May 17th at 7:30 p.m. For a complete schedule of his upcoming Healing Masses and to read about other testimonies visit online at: www.fatherfernando.com. To view these and other Healing Masses presided over by priests of the Companions of the Cross please visit our Companions' web site at: www.companionscross.ca – and click on "Upcoming Events" – Healing Mass Schedule.



Left: Fr. Fernando Suarez

I was in an accident 3 years ago, where I was hit by a car and I sustained head and body injuries. My left side was affected, my left eye, my left ear, I was suffering from weakness and dizziness. I have consulted a lot of doctors and they found out that I have an infection in my brain and it was affecting my nervous system. Today, I was prayed over by Fr. Fernando. When he touched me I felt dizzy once again and almost fell to the floor, but what was amazing was that I felt stronger and I can walk again without my cane. Thanks be to God the Father and to Fr. Fernando Suarez
- Rodolfo

I thank you God the Father for sending Fr. Fernando here to our parish. I thank you for healing my back pain and for letting me feel your tremendous healing

power through the prayers of Fr. Fernando. - Cecilia

I have a slipped disk and the doctors told me that if the pain persists I would have to undergo a procedure to correct my slipped disk. The pain has already spread from my waist down to my feet. When Fr. Fernando prayed over me and touched my back, the pain was gone and I even bent my back and I cannot feel the pain anymore. Thank you my Lord Jesus.
- Grace

I have had a neck pain for a long time now, when Fr. Fernando prayed over me the pain disappeared instantly. Praise the Lord and thank you Fr. Fernando.
- Pat

When I came here at St. Barnabas today, my whole body was in pain, especially my knees. After Fr. Fernando prayed over me, I felt good and all the pain is gone. Thank you Jesus and thank you Fr. Fernando.
- Jean

My knees are very bad, I have trouble getting up in the morning and I have trouble walking. When Fr. Fernando prayed over me, my knees felt good and are pain free now. Thanks be to God.
- Ivan

I had pain in my left hip for 6 months. Tonight when Father (Fernando) prayed with me the pain went (away). I thank God for this great favour. - Imelda
I could not hear in both my ears and now I can hear again. - Ben

I had a frozen shoulder that has been aching for 12 years, miraculously the pain is gone. Praise the Lord! Thank you Fr. Fernando, may the Lord give you health and many years in your ministry.
- Nelia

I was healed of my arthritis in my right knee. - Mary

Four weeks ago I was hit by a car, my lower back was injured. Today after Fr. Fernando's healing Mass, my pain is gone. - Freddy

I have been a diabetic for 28 years. Two months ago my left eye just closed. I consulted my ophthalmologist and he told me that it will take 6 to 12 months to heal, but last November I attended Fr. Fernando's healing Mass and I was miraculously healed. I can now open my left eye. Thank you Jesus, thank you Mother Mary, thank you Fr. Fernando.
- Ofelia ☺



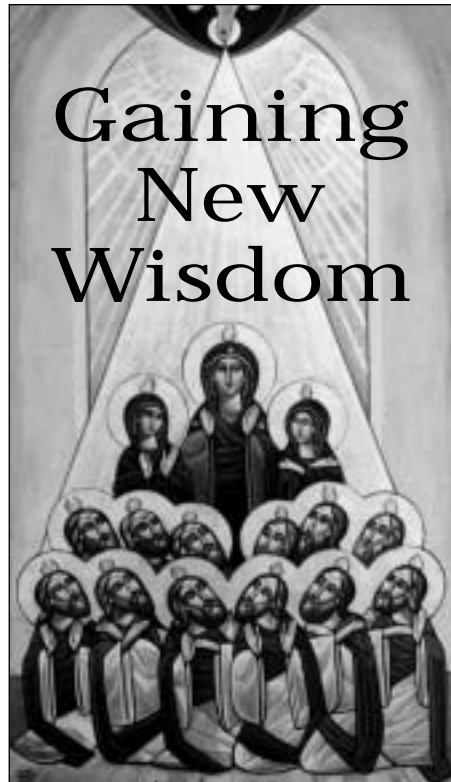
FEATURE

by Fr. Sean Wenger

"If you keep doin' what you're doin', you're gonna keep gettin' what you're gettin'." Although this catchy bit of folk wisdom sounds funny, I believe it is very true. I have applied this catchy maxim to a lot of different scenarios. As Companions of the Cross we have a zeal to see renewal in the Church. For the priests who work in parishes, or something similar, there is a desire to see the fullness of this renewal in our communities. What we have discovered quickly is that the vision we have been given is not something that is easily achieved. We are certain of the vision the Lord has given us through our founder, Fr. Bob, what we are becoming more certain of as well, is that the Lord has more to teach us about how to implement that vision in a rapidly changing world.

This past January, most of the Companions of the Cross in pastoral ministry (pastors, associates, chaplains, etc.) gathered in Galveston, Texas to see what we could learn that might assist us in realizing the vision the Lord has given us as a community. In the past we had gathered the week before our Community Reflection Days in August. I have written in the past about my impressions of those days. What struck me on both occasions previously is that my brothers were in pain. I don't think it's any secret that my peers and I have struggled as we have sought to lead God's people to the vision he has for us. I don't think there's any shame in this either – after all, we are Companions of the Cross. That's probably the first lesson to learn: when I was a seminarian I learned from books but now I learn most of my lessons at the Cross.

Twenty of us spent a week under the direction of Jim Herrington, a Baptist leader I met while in Houston, who has



become a good friend and a mentor to me. Jim brought a unique combination of expertise and experience to our week together. If I can summarize what he came to teach us, it is that we need to learn new ways of thinking about and responding to our current context.

In his presentation Jim made a powerful case for the extent and the pace of change in our world. This change has had a significant impact on churches. Jim learned this lesson as the Director of Union Baptist Association: the association of over 700 Baptist churches in the Houston area. He says that he was like a Baptist bishop. What he and his staff learned was that their churches were making progress but losing ground. Although they were growing, they weren't growing as fast as the city was – they were losing ground annually. This led to a series of focus

groups with pastors. Initially everyone gave their superiors the kinds of answers they thought the leadership was looking for. Finally, one pastor poured out his heart, "I'm working harder than I've ever worked, for less results than I've ever gotten. My health is failing, my family is falling apart and I don't know what to do" (Jim Herrington et al., *The Leader's Journey*, p. 4). What Jim and his staff found was that there was broad discouragement and confusion among pastors – even depression and cynicism. In many ways it was this story that attracted me to Jim and the kind of work he is doing. I think there is a similar cry in the hearts of many of our priests.

The response of Jim and his staff was to set out to learn something new. They sought to discover what they didn't know. The fruit of the work of a broad cross-section of Christian leaders in Houston was what Jim tried to share with us. We were presented with a model of change that had three elements. At the heart of this model is the vitality that must come from a passionate relationship with God and authentic relationships with each other. The model of conversion that leads to this vitality emphasized obedience to God, a reflective lifestyle rooted in prayer and the experience of living in community. As you can see, these elements resonate deeply with the vision we have as Companions.

The other piece of the model is learning new ways to think. We must examine our mental models: the set of beliefs and assumptions that help us manage the more complex tasks in our lives. We cannot live without mental models but we can hold them up in front of ourselves and ask if they're true. What are our mental models of Church and parish and leadership?



Another piece that was new to all of us was learning a model of relationships called living systems. This is a model from the psychological world that looks at all organizations and groups not as something mechanical but as living organisms. Families, parishes and businesses are all made up of parts that cannot be replaced and repaired like the parts of a machine; the parts, whether individuals or groups, form an organic whole that is deeply affected when change is made to any one part. It's like the difference between replacing the parts in a car versus in a human body. One of the characteristics of these organic systems is that they all carry a certain amount of anxiety. A new way of approaching leadership is learning how to identify the anxiety in our families and communities while learning ways not to react to it ourselves: unhealthy reactions only feed more anxiety into this living system. This often requires self-awareness and change on the part of the leader or on the part of anyone who wants to positively influence the system.

The final of the three parts of this model of change is the actual 8-step change process itself. We didn't spend very much time on the particulars of this process so I won't say much about it. The wisdom of the overall model is that you can't launch



into a change process, no matter how good it is, without some other areas. We need to be sure that there is real vitality in our relationship with God and our relationships with each others. It's also true that as our world changes we may need to learn some new skills: in particular, we may need to learn new ways of thinking about the challenges that we face as a Church.

There was a real excitement about what we learned while we were in Galveston.

There was also the recognition that there is much more that we need to learn. We have only begun to understand some of the concepts that were presented to us. It did, however, renew the hope that all that God has revealed to us can be realized. For our part, we must continue to depend on his wisdom and seek it out when we recognize that we don't have it. ☺

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Fr. Sean Wenger is pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas parish in Halifax, Nova Scotia.



Companions of the Cross

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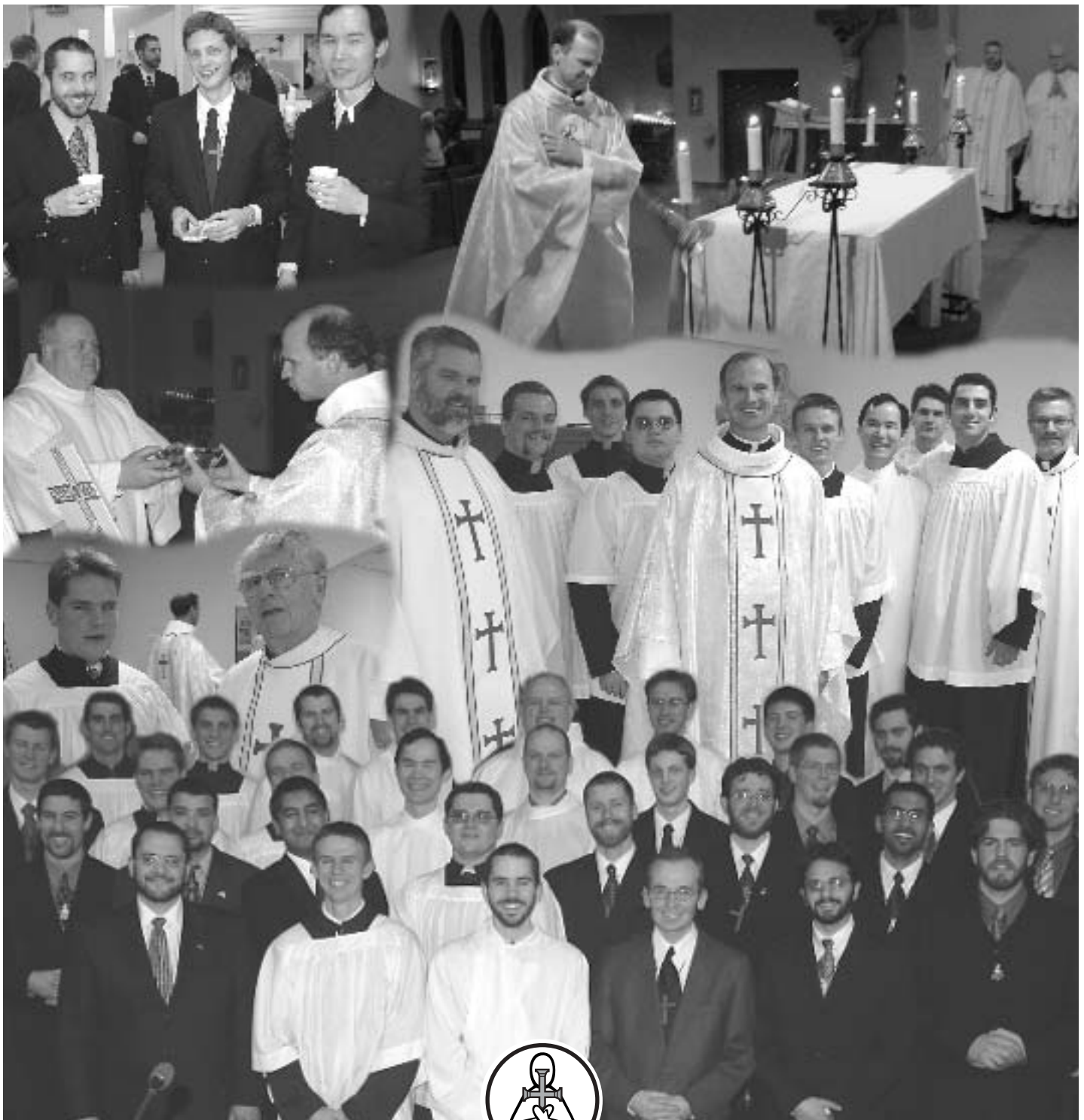
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I would like a free subscription to the Companions' quarterly newsletter.

Please pray for the following special intention: _____



Please tear out this entire page, place it in the postage paid envelope provided, and then drop it in the mail. Your support of our community is very much appreciated!



Our Community Needs You!

The photos you see were taken at our annual Companions' Ministries Mass (held in March 2004). At this Mass, various seminarians of the community received the ministry of lector, acolyte, or received the call to candidacy. God willing, this ceremony marks another step along the path to ordination to the priesthood. All of you who are our spiritual and temporal benefactors make this journey possible through your generous support of these men. Please keep up the good work! We need you. We thank God for you. We are praying for you.

FEATURE

God's Glorious Plan for Human Sexuality

by Charles and Christine Labrosse

The call to 'nuptial love' revealed through our sexuality is the fundamental element of human existence in the world." Pope John Paul II

At the Companions of the Cross mini conference in February we had the great privilege of sharing a teaching on the Theology of the Body as it relates to marriage. This theology of the Body was articulated by Pope John Paul II in the first few years of his pontificate. It is certainly one of the most powerful and comprehensive teachings on the Church's understanding of sexual morality that we have ever heard. Our approach to the teaching was taken from Christopher West who visited Ottawa last fall and conducted a workshop on this theology. His presentation helped make it understandable and approachable.

John Paul II has said that the body is the revelation of the person. Our bodies are meant to communicate the very mystery of God. The invisible mystery of God is that God is love! We were created in God's image, male and female and our bodies make visible God's very being and life. God is a communion of persons and that Trinitarian life is an exchange of his love. We image God in the communion of man and woman. Most of us don't understand the sexual union properly – we don't understand it as God intended it. The world and its images have imposed themselves on our minds in this area. The sexual union of a man and woman is



Christine and Charles Labrosse

meant to be a symbol of the very inner life of God. This is as he intended.

There are many scriptural analogies for God's love. But the central image found throughout scripture from Genesis through to Revelation is the analogy of husband and wife or bridegroom and bride. God's plan is to "marry" us or draw us into closest communion with himself.

The body has a "language" that is meant to proclaim the truth of God's love poured out in Christ's body given us for us. Christ's love is free, total, faithful and fruitful. Our love should reflect these particular characteristics of Jesus' love. This is what we commit to at the altar and what we are meant to express when we become "one flesh". Marriage exists as a foreshadowing for our marriage in heaven with God. We are called to love as God loves in a life-giving communion of persons.

Marriage is a sacrament or a living sign that communicates and participates in the union of Christ and the Church. Vows lived out in the "one flesh" union constitute this living sign. *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great foreshadowing; I mean in that it refers to Christ and the church"* (Eph 5:31-32). Jesus left his father in heaven and he left the home of his mother on earth to give up his body for his bride (us, the Church) so that we might become "one flesh" with

him. The place we become one flesh with him specifically is in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the sacramental consummation of the marriage between Christ and the Church. When we receive the body of our heavenly bridegroom into our own body, just like a bride we conceive new life in us – God's life. The "one flesh" union of man and wife foreshadows the Eucharistic communion of Christ and the Church.

This love of Jesus in giving himself totally to us is the way we are called to love each other in marriage. At the altar the bride and groom commit themselves to each other freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully until death. Then when they consummate their marriage with sexual intercourse they are enacting that commitment that they made verbally. The husband and wife express with their bodies what they expressed at the altar with their minds and hearts. A renewal of wedding vows is really what is taking place each time they have intercourse.

If sexual union is to reflect Christ's love for the Church then how does Christ love? He loves by dying on the cross for us. Jesus gave his very life for us. This love of Jesus should reflect true love in marriage. This kind of love has the characteristics of Christ's love. **FREE** – Our love must be free. Jesus said *"They do not take my life from me, I lay it down freely."* **TOTAL** – Our love must be a total gift of self that is unreserved. **FAITHFUL** – Our love must be faithful as Jesus has said, "I

am with you until the end of the age... I will never leave you or forsake you." FRUITFUL – Our love must be fruitful as Jesus said, "I have come to give them life and give it in abundance." Love is not a sterile proposition. God is the God of life and love and we can't separate the two, they are intimately intertwined.

Sexual union is glorious and beautiful because it is meant to express the very love of God himself. God wants us to speak the truth with our bodies. It is possible to speak lies with our bodies as well. Satan would love it if we do that and in our culture there are plenty of opportunities and plenty of voices telling us to speak lies with our bodies. If you want to see what is most beautiful in this life look at what is most distorted, perverted and degraded. Satan counterfeits the beautiful.



Christine and Charles Labrosse with Fr. Roger Vandenakker

So really all questions of sexual morality can come down to one: Does this act reflect God's free, total, faithful and fruitful love... or does it not? So anytime we look at actions or behaviour, such as masturbation, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, homosexual behaviour, or intentionally sterilized acts of intercourse, we can ask ourselves this question.

When dealing with the question of contraception the Church's teaching and the world have a tremendous parting of the ways. God's plan for life is that we be open to it – contraception says that I don't want life. The Pope says: We "can speak

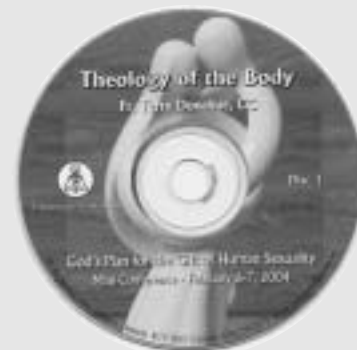
of moral good and evil" in the sexual relationship "according to whether... or not it has the character of the truthful sign" (Theology of the Body, 141, 142). We need to ask ourselves if our marriages reflect the truthful sign of God's free, total, faithful and fruitful love. God's love is generous and generates life. It all comes down to a single question for us: How healthy would a marriage be if a husband/wife were regularly unfaithful to their wedding vows? The Church's teaching on sexual morality is a call for us to be faithful to our wedding vows. The Pope says: The language of the body has "clear-cut meanings" all of which are "programmed... in the conjugal consent." For example, to "the question: 'Are you willing to accept responsibly and with love the children that God may give you...?' – the man and the woman reply: 'Yes'" (Theology of the Body, 363, 364).

Our hearts need to be transformed in the area of sexual morality. There is no condemnation here. All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Christ came to restore God's original intention of love in the world and through an ongoing conversion of heart we can experience

the redemption of our sexuality. It doesn't matter what we have done in our past or what we are doing now. As we repent and turn to the Lord he will heal us and set us free to love as he loves – freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully. The Good News is that God wants us to embrace the gloriousness of our bodies and the meaning of life. Jesus calls us to embrace the fullness of truth of our creation and redemption as men and women of God! ☺

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Charles and Christine Labrosse have been married for 16 years. They are actively involved parishioners at St. Mary's parish.

Own your own set of CDs containing all the talks given earlier this year at the "God's Plan for the Gift of Human Sexuality" Companions' mini-conference held in Ottawa.



This 4 CD set is available for just \$15.00 if picked up at our CC Office (237 Breezehill Ave - behind St. Mary's Church), or for \$20.00 if you require us to mail it to you. Just call us at (613) 728-3175 or email us at compcros@cyberus.ca.

Disc 1
 Theology of the Body
 (Fr. Terry Donahue)

Disc 2
 Marital Love:
 Free, Total, Faithful & Fruitful
 (Charles & Christine Labrosse)

Disc 3
 Same Sex Attraction
 (Fr. Terry Donahue)
 & God's Plan for
 Single Catholics
 (Fr. Pierre Ingram)

Disc 4
 Youth Chastity
 & Theology of the Body
 (Desmond Sanesh &
 Elizabeth Valenzuela)

LAY ASSOCIATES CORNER

School of Evangelization Testimony

by Rhea Pastway

I had finished my first year of Food and Nutrition Management at Kemptville College (just outside of Ottawa) and was really looking forward to a summer of working. I was thrilled about the break from eight months of a heavy workload and hectic, non-private residence life. I was hoping for a quiet summer where I would enjoy plenty of time alone, while regrouping and building my relationship with the Lord. I had felt this relationship slipping throughout the year. I was trying to fit Him into my life rather than just having Him fit there naturally.

Two classmates and I found an apartment in Ottawa and they both went home for the summer, while I found a great job in Ottawa and decided to stay for the summer. But boy I got what I asked for - time alone and plenty of it! In fact it got really lonely at times. I began to feel this prayer surface continually from the depths of my heart just asking God for some kind of support and encouragement. I just couldn't figure out this uneasy, and at times, empty feeling inside myself.

During a weekend off work, I came across a brochure on the School Of Evangelization at the back of Holy Canadian Martyrs, my home Parish in Combermere, Ontario. It was taking place at St. Mary's parish in Ottawa, the parish I had been attending frequently. I decided to go almost instantly, which was strange because normally I'm not too interested in any retreat gatherings.

I won't discuss each exciting thing I experienced, but I feel the need to talk about a few really special things that the Lord did that week. The first night I was a bit unsure and didn't know what to expect,



but we began with the perfect start - the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This was crucial because I needed to be sure there were no obstacles that would hold me back from receiving throughout the week.

The Lord has used the Companions of the Cross incredibly and I am so thankful to them for their "yes" to serving God, because this "yes" has had an immense impact on my own life. The Lord truly worked through these seminarians and priests. The Lord was speaking through them to me personally and gently placing things He wanted me to understand into my mind. He spoke personally to each person in this way.

During the talks, which the Companions gave, each of us were inspired in different ways. This helped me to know the Holy Spirit was there telling me what I needed to know and telling others what they needed to know.

It was incredible how He left me feeling after even one day. I went back to my apartment at night feeling as though something was actually growing in me. I just kept thinking "What is this?!"

Each day something new "clicked", while other things were repeatedly taught to me in the gentlest, most loving way. It

became obvious that I needed to make a big change in my life. I had been living a double life. It is one thing to say I believe in God and want to follow Him, but living it is the real test. He showed me that going to Mass on Sunday and trying to "fit" Him into my day with some nightly prayers isn't enough. He proved that to me throughout the school year, when I felt myself drifting from His side because of this "too-busy" attitude. He taught me that I must live for Him and devote my entire day every day to Him.

In the weeks following the School of Evangelization, I had been given plenty of time to reflect and some things have become clearer. One big thing is that I have to live each day for Christ alone. I don't mean that I have to sit idly in isolation and think of Him and only Him all day, every day of my life, while the rest of the world goes about their daily tasks. He is asking me to go about my daily tasks and duties and to do them well, to give everything my best, for the love of Him. Everything revolves around Him and everything can glorify Him - if it is done with love.

This was definitely a very important point that was planted in me that week in many ways. Even on our bad days He calls us to complete the task He has given us with

love. We can offer up our bad days and say "Okay, this suffering gives me a part in your cross – thank You, because this is bringing me closer to You." What a gift. I had to struggle with this for awhile, and I still do. It is hard going to the Lord with empty hands and admitting I have nothing. I am still working at making room for Him in my heart. But He showed me that this is the only way that I am going to get rid of the empty feeling in my life. He sometimes is just there knocking ever so softly saying "Hey Rhea it's RIGHT HERE, you just have to ask!" And that's when I have to ask with empty, open hands, sincerely wanting Him to come into my life. He needs plenty of room because there is LOTS of love there and I can't try and jam Him in somewhere... it just doesn't work. I need Him to move freely in my life without boundaries. This requires a lot of sacrifice of my worldly things - which really may seem so important at times, but in reality are not.

One moment that has stuck with me since that week is when we were praying and I was really trying to leave my heart completely open. In this moment of prayer it hit me that "He is my FATHER!" He allowed me to really feel this love. I could not handle all of His immense and powerful love at once, but He shared a part of the love that He has for me. I have an earthly mother and father who love me very much – but this love from our Lord – this is the most intense and complete love I have ever known. He gave me the grace at that moment of knowing I was NEVER alone. No matter how lonely and lost I feel at times – He just made me know that He is right there loving me with His pure

and unconditional love. He made me know that I am His daughter! Me, a mortal sinner, am my Lord and Saviour's daughter. And I can confidently say "That's my Dad!" And this was by far the most wonderful thing my Lord has done for me – allowing me to know some of that love. It has shown me the importance of sharing that real love He places in each of us, with others.

So basically that week I really fell in love. The grace of God revealed to me that this is what I need. This love between the Lord and I has been growing every day. I most definitely don't have a 24/7 high because of it and I don't expect to have this wonderful, joyful feeling at all times. But, He is what I have been searching for - a solid rock in my life. He showed me what is really and truly important in life. He has given me the gift of a stronger faith and hope - which has resulted in my ultimate goal - to one day reach Christ and be with Him eternally. He has given me the desire to invite others to come with me on this journey. This is what we all want so badly but in our searching we try to fill the place of God in our lives with other things that give us temporary satisfaction. These things are disguised as beautiful, acceptable, and peace-filled, but the Lord has shown me how deceiving and destructive these things really are. All we have to do is ASK and He will give us more.

After the week was finished, I was left with all of these incredible graces, a burning love and so much to reflect on - and I had to go back to work! I began feeling the uneasiness creeping back, but now I had hope and the desire to pray and to lis-

ten to God. So for a couple of weeks I prayed and I really listened. I kept feeling that I needed some time to reflect and to just stop and listen. It became more and more clear that I had been planning and living my life according to my wants, not to God's. I thought of a place I could go that would help me to just be still inside. I was drawn to Madonna House in my home town of Combermere. I ended up staying for the remainder of my summer vacation. It helped me to quiet my interior self. This has brought about a whole other deepening of faith and was absolutely necessary in order to allow the things (learned at the School Of Evangelization) to sink in and become clear. The Lord has shown me how to apply these things in my life and to really live out the Gospel without compromise.

Through participating in the School Of Evangelization there was this unique, incredible seed planted in me. I still to this day cannot grasp exactly what the Lord did, but my heart knows – He is the TRUTH.

For further info on this year's school, see the brochure in the centre of the newsletter. ☺

LAY ASSOCIATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

Healing Mass
Monday, May 17, 2004
 St. Maurice parish
 with Fr. Fernando Suarez
 7:30 p.m.

Rekindle the Fire

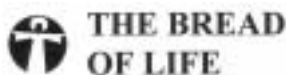
*A day of renewal hosted by the Bread of Life Renewal Centre
 Renew your Faith, Hope, Love, Commitment
 A chance to meet and talk with writers of The Bread of Life magazine*

Featuring: Fr. Peter Coughlin, Christine Labrosse, Fr. Paul Voisin, C.R., Sue Atkinson and other writers of *The Bread of Life*

Location: Holy Trinity SS, 2420 Sixth Line, Oakville, Ontario Date: Saturday, September 11, 2004 Time: 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 includes bag lunch

For more info, call 905-529-4496 or
 e-mail: info@thebreadoflife.ca



Talks include:

Jesus the Bread of Life by Fr. Paul Voisin, C.R. – Renew your faith

Journey of Hope by Sue Atkinson – Renew your hope

Covenant of Love by Christine Labrosse – Renew your love

Rekindle the Fire Within by Fr. Peter Coughlin – Renew your commitment

Holy Mass – Rekindle the Fire

TESTIMONY

Why I am a Priest

by Fr. Allan MacDonald

Whoever called me to be a priest? God did!! Ten years ago (May 14, 1994) I prostrated myself on the floor of St. Finnan's Cathedral in Alexandria, Ontario and was ordained a priest through the imposition of hands by Most Rev. Eugene LaRocque. At that moment I was ontologically changed through the permanent character of Holy Orders and now share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ, a priest in the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:1-10). My life has never been the same. Is it a great life? You bet! It does have tough days but these are far outnumbered by the great opportunities the Lord Jesus has given me to share in His Priesthood and see how He is working His power in people's lives, as He is in mine.

I am the oldest of six children, having been raised in the parish of St. Raphael's. My parents taught us the value of our faith and great respect for priests. Growing up at home I can never remember my parents saying negative things about priests. This gave all of us a great love for priests, men who had sacrificed so much so as to be of service to us. All my life I have been blessed to know priests who loved being priests, were men of prayer and at the same time enjoyed life. They prayed with us, cried with us, and laughed with us.

I first thought of being a priest when I was asked by Bishop LaRocque at my Confirmation in grade eight. I firmly believe it was at that moment the "seed" of my call to the priesthood was planted. I also remember a very passionate homily that Fr. Thomas Villeneuve gave one Vocations Sunday. It had a very profound effect on me. He pleaded with us to pray



Fr. Allan MacDonald

for vocations and for all the young men to ask themselves, "Lord, could you be calling me?" There was one woman who also helped me in my discernment, Mae Levert. She never missed an opportunity to encourage me and to tell me she was praying for me. As I look back now I know that all these people were instruments of Jesus. He was calling me to be a priest through them. Yet I still had my free will, and I ran away from the Lord's call. After high school I went to St. Francis Xavier University. My intention was to be a corporate lawyer. All the while the Lord Jesus kept giving me little reminders that He had special plans for me. I chose to ignore Him, until my last year. It was then that I went on a retreat that really helped me. It gave me the courage I needed to respond wholeheartedly to Jesus. I gave up my plans to go to law school and I entered St. Peter's Seminary in September, 1989. I have never regretted it!

The Lord has blessed me with being assigned as assistant pastor at St. Columban's, pastor at St. Anthony's, Apple Hill and St. Michael's, Monkland, chaplain at St. Joseph's High School and

pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish, all in the diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall. My two greatest loves in the priesthood are the Eucharist and Confessions. In both I am humbled to act *in personae Christi capitis* – in the person of Christ the head. In repeating the words of institution and through the power of the Holy Spirit the elements of bread and wine are changed for us into the actual body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus – right there in my hands!!! WOW!!! And to administer Jesus' forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession is another WOW! I am 38 years old. I have had people come to Confession to me who had not been there since before I was born!! By the time they were rid of all the garbage they had been carrying for years I was crying, they were crying, but there was much rejoicing in heaven. Experiences like these give me the energy I need to be on a spiritual high for months. Jesus allows priest to have these experiences to show us just how much power we have in Holy Orders. If all the angels that surround the altar every time I celebrate Mass were to manifest themselves I would probably faint from the excitement and power of God.

My two keenest interests in the priesthood are youth work and vocation promotion. I have great hope in our young people. Jesus is raising up an army of young people who are madly in love with Him, love His Church and desire to be instruments of the new evangelization. I know that there is a revolution coming as more young people awaken to the lies of this world and throw out old and tired, liberal ways for more traditional and solid elements of the true faith based on a loyalty to the Magisterium, love of Mary, great respect and devotion to the Eucharist and an openness to all the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. I am very fortunate to be a priest and to be able to minister and guide these soldiers of the new evangelisation.

I am also keenly aware of the need to promote the vocations of priesthood, religious life and permanent diaconate. I am proof positive of the fact that simply asking the question, "Did you ever think of ...?" really works. **Remember, if we don't plant the seed then the Lord will have nothing to water!** We have been blessed with many fine priests, sisters, brothers and deacons in the past, in the present and will continue to be blessed in the future. We need to cooperate with Jesus and help to nurture them. Parents, never fail to present religious life as a positive option for your children. Remember, your children listen to you – your words and actions can have both a positive and negative effect on their attitude to religious life. So be very careful.

Something that the secular world has a very hard time understanding about the priesthood and religious life is the value of celibacy, obedience and simplicity of lifestyle. These may be foreign to the world, but are an integral part of the priesthood and religious life, and so of

mine. Rather than seeing them as a burden, I appreciate them as a joy. Celibacy is the living out of St. Paul's well-known exhortation: *"The unmarried man gives his mind to the Lord's affairs and how he can please the Lord; but the man who is married gives his mind to the affairs of this world and how he can please his wife, and he is divided in mind. So, too, the unmarried woman, and the virgin, gives her mind to the Lord's affairs and to being holy in body and spirit; but the married woman gives her mind to the affairs of this world and to how she can please her husband. I am saying this only to help you, not to put a bridle on you, but so that everything is as it should be, and you are able to give your undivided attention to the Lord"* (I Cor 7:32-35). Obedience and simplicity of lifestyle is the practical method of following our Lord's advice to the rich young man: *"If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me"* (Mt 19:21).

I could write lots more, but I think you get the general drift of this article. The Lord called me directly and through others. **I love being a priest** and it is a very great time to be a priest. I will end this reflection with asking all of you to join with me in prayer. Please join me in praying one decade of the Rosary every day for vocations in the service of the Universal Church. Offer up your suffering, sacrifices and days of fasting for this intention. If you are a single man reading this article, I invite you to ask Jesus, "Lord, are you calling me to be a priest?" or "Lord, help me to discern my vocation in life." If you feel the Lord may be calling you I can help you with some good reading material. Please contact me at frallanmacdonald@hotmail.com or (613) 725-2168. **Please pray for support and encourage priests.** All of us have said "Yes" to the Lord and desire to be of service to Him through you. In following the Lord we have left everything behind, but have gained more than we could ever imagine. It is a great life! And this is why I said, "Here I am Lord, send me!" ☺

V O C A T I O N V A C A T I O N

Join Fr. Mark Goring of St. Mary's parish (Ottawa) and Sisters Bernadette and Elizabeth of the Sisters of Our Lady Immaculate (Cambridge) for a "Vocation Vacation" to take place from June 27th-July 3rd, 2004.



This Vocation Vacation is limited to 12 young men and women between the ages of 16-20 who have a serious interest in investigating the nature of religious life.

It will provide a unique opportunity to visit several men's and women's religious communities across Ontario, and experience what a call to religious life is all about. The group will set out from Ottawa in two vans and make stops in places such as Madonna House in Combermere. Participants are asked to pay \$100 each to help defray the expenses of this trip.

For further information please contact Fr. Mark at (613) 728-9811.



COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTES

by Fr. John Vandenaeker

Companions of the Cross Privacy Policy

by Ken Gorman: CC Director of
Resource Development

Introduction:

The Companions of the Cross respect your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to deliver services and to keep you informed and up to date on the activities of the Companions of the Cross, including programs, services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer or to give, open houses and more through periodic contacts. If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts simply contact us by phone at (613) 728-3175 or via e-mail at compcross@cyberus.ca, and we will gladly accommodate your request.

Our commitment:

Our organization is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of its employees, members, customers and other stakeholders. We value the trust of those we deal with, and of the public, and recognize that maintaining this trust requires that we be transparent and accountable in how we treat the information that you choose to share with us.

During the course of our various projects and activities, we frequently gather and use personal information. Anyone from whom we collect such information should expect that it will be carefully protected and that any use of or other dealing with this information is subject to consent. Our privacy practices are designed to achieve this.

Defining personal information:

Personal information is any information that can be used to distinguish, identify or contact a specific individual. This information can include an individual's opinions or beliefs, as well as facts about, or related to, the individual. Exceptions: business contact information and certain publicly available information, such as names, addresses and telephone numbers as published in telephone directories, are not considered personal information.

Where an individual uses his or her home contact information as business contact information as well, we consider that the contact information provided is business contact information, and is not therefore subject to protection as personal information.

Privacy practices:

Personal information gathered by our organization is kept in confidence. Our personnel are authorized to access personal information based only on their need to deal with the information for the reason(s) for which it was obtained. Safeguards are in place to ensure that the information is not disclosed or shared more widely than is necessary to achieve the purpose for which it was gathered. We also take measures to ensure the integrity of this information is maintained and to prevent its being lost or destroyed.

We collect, use and disclose personal information only for purposes that a reasonable person would consider appropriate in light of the circumstances. We routinely offer individuals we deal with the opportunity to opt not to have their information shared for purposes beyond those for which it was explicitly collected.

Website and Electronic Commerce:

We use password protocols and encryption software to protect personal and other information we receive when a product or service is requested and/or paid for online. Our software is routinely updated to maximize protection of such information.

Updating of privacy policy:

We regularly review our privacy practices for our various activities, and update our policy. Please check our website on an ongoing basis for information on our most up-to-date practices.

Contact Information:

Questions, concerns or complaints relating to our privacy policy or the treatment of personal information should be e-mailed to: compcross@cyberus.ca. Attention: Privacy Officer. Further information on privacy and your rights in regard to your personal information may be found on the website of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada at www.priv-com.gc.ca/



INVITATION

The Companions of the Cross wish to invite everyone to their "Foundation Day" Mass at St. Mary's church, Ottawa, on Friday, May 7th beginning at 7:30 p.m.

This annual celebration marks the anniversary of the founding of the community. Many priests, seminarians, Lay Associates, and other friends of the community will be on hand. A reception will follow in the parish hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. Come celebrate!

**Fr. Jeff Shannon &
Dallas Texas Life Teen
Retreat**

Dear Fr. John,
I wanted to tell you thanks for helping us once again by putting me in contact with Fr. Jeff Shannon for our St. Ann's Life Teen retreat this past weekend (Feb. 27-29, 2004). He did an awesome job! Over 200 youth participated. Thanks again for your willingness to support us. I hope that we can do it again! May God bless you and your community.

Peace, Kurt Klement
St. Ann's Parish Youth Ministry
Coordinator

Note: To find out more about Life Teen, St. Ann's parish, and to see more photos of this retreat visit: <http://www.stannparish.org/fform/formations/9/index.html>

**February Mini-Conference
Feedback**

Dear Companions of the Cross,
I just wanted to thank you for the lovely conference this weekend (God's Plan for the Gift of Human Sexuality - Feb. 6&7, 2004)! My name is Ashley (15 yrs old) and I came with the group from Cornwall but I'm from a small town called Alexandria. Thank you for having me as your reader for the Mass, it meant a lot to me. I was so nervous but I'm glad I had some support from your seminarians before the Mass started. Would you please tell Fr. Terry that he did a wonderful job on his talks! Wow... a big Amen on those. The talk on "Same Sex Attraction: Church Teaching & Pastoral Outreach" was great, it made me think twice about those people



Left: Fr. Jeff celebrates Mass at Life Teen Retreat

Below: CC Seminarian Barry Phillips with a Youth Group that attended CC February Mini-Conference



out there. I'm still kind of confused when it comes to if it's right or wrong but I commend those who were able to talk about it. I had tears through the whole thing!... Your Youth Fest was Amazing!.. Your speakers and the Net team made it so much clearer for us teenagers! I'm also a cousin of Fr. Allan MacDonald. I wasn't aware that it was going to be the

Companions of the Cross but when I realized it, it made me think of him. I'm not sure what his e-mail address is but could you tell him that his cousin Ashley McDougall says hello?...thanks! Thank you for all that you do in the community. If there is anything I could do, please let me know I'd love to help!
- Ashley McDougall

National March for Life

This year's National March for Life will take place in Ottawa on Thursday May 13th. Mass will be celebrated at Notre Dame Cathedral at 10:00 a.m. followed by a 12:00 noon gathering on Parliament Hill in preparation for a short march through downtown Ottawa. This event is hosted by Campaign Life Coalition. Last year over 3,500 people attended. For more information about this event (and other related events), please visit CLC's web site at: <http://www.campaignlife-coalition.com/>. Let us pray and witness to God's plan for human life!

Diaconate Ordinations

The Companions of the Cross are pleased to announce that four seminarians of the community will be ordained to the diaconate at our Sept. 14th 'Triumph of the Cross' Feast Day celebration. These men are: Francis Ching; Brian Christie; Michael Minifie; and Michael Scherrey. Archbishop Marcel Gervais will preside at the 7:30 p.m. Mass that will be held in St. Mary's church, Ottawa. Everyone is urged to pray for these men as they ready themselves for this momentous day. We would like all of our friends, lay associates, and parishioners to join us for these ordinations and share in our joy! A more formal and detailed announcement will appear in our Aug. 1st newsletter.

Sing A New Song To the Lord

The "Fiat Praise Band" is a dynamic Catholic music ministry headed up by Glenn Periera of Fiat Music and St. Maurice parish in Ottawa (Nepean). Here are some key characteristics of who they are and what they do:



1. We focus on a contemporary worship style playing music that speaks to the young people of today.
2. We feature a full rhythm section of drums, bass guitar and keyboard.
3. Four of us played with Marcel Dion and Magnificat Ministries.
4. Three of us are Steubenville alumni, and have studied under Jim Cowan.
5. We place a strong emphasis on three part choral arrangements where each part is doubled and sometimes tripled with tenor's, alto's and soprano's.
6. We currently have 13 members while we consider adding a couple of violinists.
7. Our first CD, "*One Voice*" was released during the Christmas of 2002. We plan to release our next CD during the Christmas of 2004.

8. We currently lead music for Festivals of Praise at St. Maurice church in Nepean every last Saturday of the month.

9. We are currently available to lead musical worship for conferences, retreats, parish missions, and other events.

10. We have plans to put together a series of praise and worship workshops. These workshops would include both musical and spiritual aspects of worship leading.

11. Here are our 13 team members with a short bio for each.

Glenn Pereira - Lead Vocals - Keyboard and Guitar, leader of the Fiat Praise band, former Magnificat guitarist and vocalist, music minister at St. Maurice, music teacher Fiat Music, Steubenville Alumni

Kerri Pereira - Soprano, government finance clerk and mother of two

Paul Beaubien - Bassist, Music minister, former Magnificat bassist

Ryan Larose - Guitarist/Bassist, Catholic high school teacher and Challenge leader

Trina Larose - Soprano, Former Magnificat Vocalist, Catholic middle school teacher and NET Australia Alumni

Susan Nolan - Alto, Nurse and mother of four, Woman of Bethany

Joanne Williamson - Alto, Social worker and mother of two

Samantha Cimpayo - Alto/Soprano, High school senior and devoted senior youth group member (St. Maurice)

Dan Jeffrey - Drummer, Former Magnificat Drummer, Residential supervisor for Christian Horizons, former Companions seminarian

Jim Anderson - Guitarist and Tenor, Masters in Theology-University of

Steubenville, home schooling teacher, NET Alumni

Lisa Anderson - Soprano, Steubenville History Graduate, home schooling teacher and mother of three

Mattias Garcia - Tenor, Music Minister at Annunciation of the Lord, engineering student

Doug McColeman - Tenor, Bell technician, former Companions seminarian and NET Alumni, St. Mary's youth minister.

If you are interested in booking "The Fiat Praise Band" for your event, please contact Glenn Pereira for more information at 224-8387 or via email at fiatmusic@rogers.com

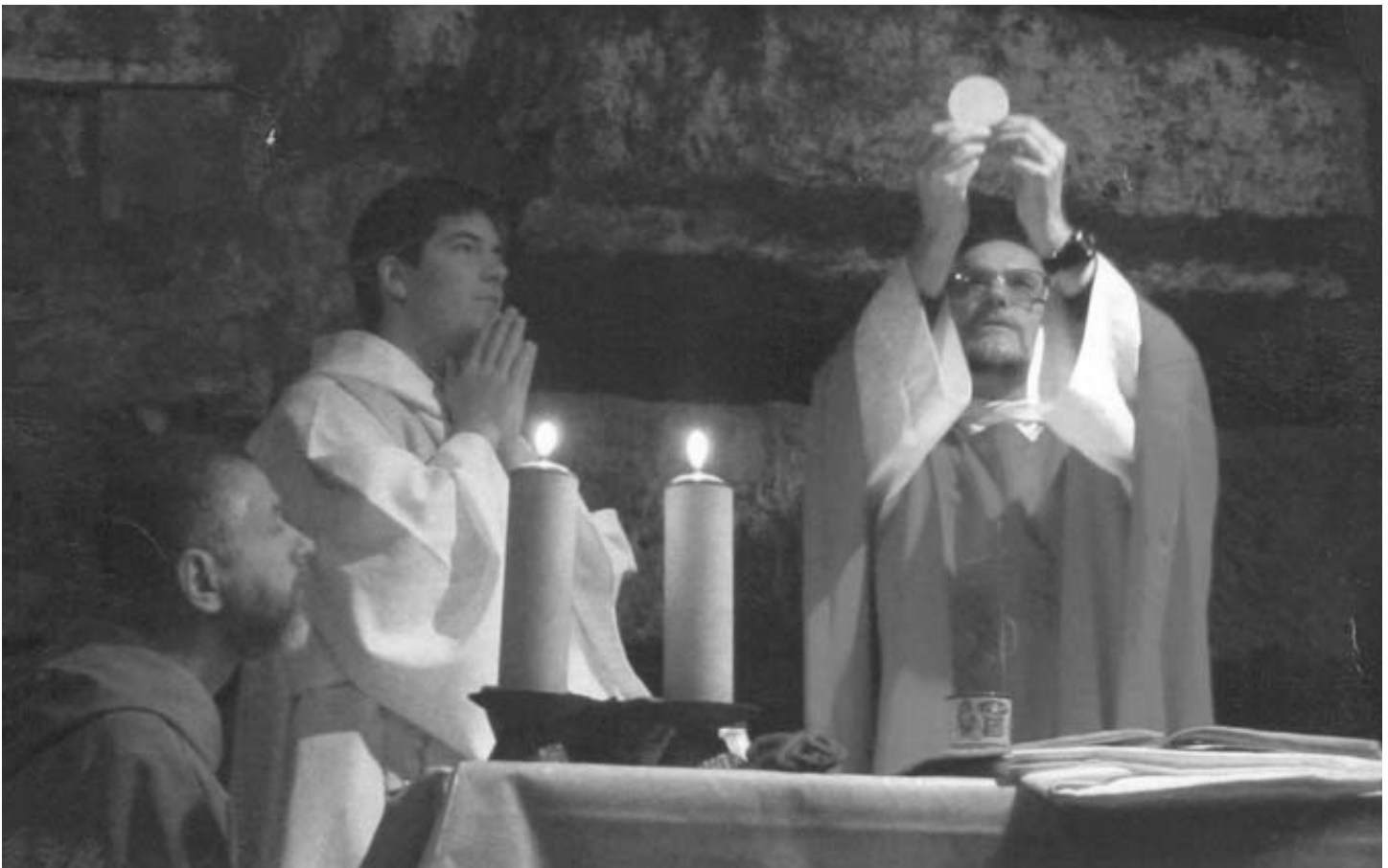
Mass Intentions

The Companions of the Cross have received many requests to offer Masses for various special intentions. So many, in fact, that we have been forced to make the following change to our Mass intention policy. From now on, priests of the community who receive these intentions will be 'doubling up' on them. What this means is that our CC Office, which handles all such requests, will be forwarding 'two' intentions for every 'Unannounced Mass' our CC priests are asked to offer up. This situation is not unique to the Companions. Some parishes have also been forced to go this route of 'multiple

Morning Entrustment Prayer of the Companions of the Cross

O Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God and our Mother,
model of Christian discipleship,
our Queen,
we give ourselves completely to Jesus through you.
Be our Advocate and strong defence this day.
Preserve our unity and fidelity to Holy Church.
Guide us in the life of the Spirit.
Keep us steadfast in our mission,
and ever deepen our love
for Christ and His Holy Cross.
V. Lead us, O Mother of Priests
R. To perfectly glorify Jesus Christ and the Father
in the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

IMPRIMATUR, +Marcel Gervais, Archbishop of Ottawa, April 4, 2003



intentions' to handle increased volume. This ensures that there is not a huge backlog of Mass intentions and that people's prayer requests get dealt with in a timely manner. We do not want to discourage people from asking the Companions to pray for their intentions in this special way. This is something we are glad to do! If you have any questions about this matter just give Linda O'Donnell in our CC Office a call at (613) 728-3175 or e-mail her at compcros@cyberus.ca.

Laptop Computers Needed

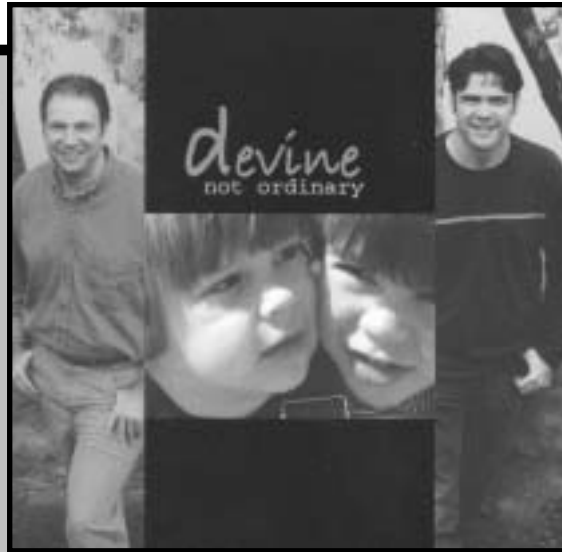
We have need of eight computers (preferably laptops/notebooks) for some our seminarians who can't afford to buy one. Computers have become a basic tool for

students attending university and college throughout North America. If you would like to donate a surplus PC laptop/notebook that is a Pentium II or better, please call CC seminarian Carlos Martins at 728-3175. He can arrange an official free appraisal of your computer so that you would be eligible for a charitable donation receipt from the Companions for the value of your gift. Also needed are old editions of licensed software such as Microsoft Office 97 or 2000. If you are no longer using such software (if you have upgraded), and you are its original licensed owner, then you can pass it on without violating any copyright laws. Thank you for helping us train the first generation of cyber-priests!

Photo of the Month

Fr. Francis Donnelly celebrates Mass in the catacombs in Rome last year on a pilgrimage. ☺

.....
Fr. John Vandenakker teaches theology and serves as Academic Director for the Companions of the Cross. He also oversees the community's fundraising and public relations efforts.



"Devine, Not Ordinary"

You will enjoy listening to this music CD from Canadian Gospel Music Association award winning Fr. Tim Devine of the Companions of the Cross and his brother Matthew. Fr. Tim and Matt have been writing, performing and recording music together for 15 years (including World Youth Day 2002). From their early attempts at song writing, to the songs on this latest CD, their songs are stories about love, relationships and about their faith in God. "Devine, Not Ordinary" is an exciting new album featuring twelve original tracks plus one bonus track.

1. Psalm 67 (Let the Peoples Praise You)
2. Everlasting Love
3. Not Ordinary
4. Symphony
5. All that I Am
6. Autumn Sky
7. Running With Eyes Closed
8. Clothed in Majesty
9. Only Say the Word
10. Make Us One
11. Renewed
12. Queen of Peace

This new CD is available for sale for \$15.00

(please add \$5.00 for shipping and handling)

by contacting D'Arcy Dufresne @ (613) 262-3689

or by e-mailing him at: write2jdufresne@hotmail.com.

Partial proceeds go to support the Companions of the Cross.

Please help support Fr. Tim Devine and his brother Matthew in their ministry of producing good contemporary Catholic Music for the People of God. Contact your local Christian radio station and request their music! (In Ottawa call CHRI during their call-in request lunches and other call in shows). As you listen to these songs, Matt & Fr. Tim hope that the words and melodies make you recognize the love that Jesus has for you and that through the music, God's name may be worshiped and glorified forever!