

Winter 2010

# Companions of the Cross

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25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
1985-2010

Inside

**Our 25th Anniversary**

**Year of the Priest**

**Spirit Alive**



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Companions of the Cross

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# FEATURE

by Fr. Bob Bedard

## Classic Fr. Bob

*This article written by Fr. Bob, was in the very first Companions of the Cross newsletter that was issued in the fall of 1987.*

I have the unfortunate habit of talking off the top of my head. I've been doing it for years. Not all of my firmly held positions have been all that carefully thought or worked out.

One of my wise sayings went something like this: "One thing we surely don't need in the Church is another religious community; we have far too many already." In the past two years I have had to revise my stand.

Unexpectedly, I find myself very involved in the founding of a new community, a group of priests and brothers with a fairly specific vision for ministry. Our strong conviction is that God himself has initiated the project. In fact, if I didn't share this conviction, if I wasn't quite sure the Lord had pointed the way, I would have no part of it. I have seen too many of my own plans run aground not to know that the only things that are really worth doing at all, are those commissioned by the Lord. Psalm 127 verse 1 catches it for me now, "*If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do the builders labour.*" It has become my theme song. I think I even sing it in my sleep.

At any rate, we believe the Companions of the Cross are the Lord's idea. Somewhere, surprisingly, in his plan for the Church of our day, he has a place for us, a role for us to fill. It is for us, in consultation with the Lord himself and with the Church through the local bishop, to seek a clarification of that role. Some things, we feel, are already clear.



We are to live a common life of a particular sort. Times of prayer together, praise of God and listening to him are to be of highest priority. Our ministry to the Lord himself is to come first. Everything else will be scheduled around it.

Our life together is to be characterized by a sharing of ourselves with one another, challenging and calling one another forth, and great gobs of mutual support. Our second priority will be ministry to one another.

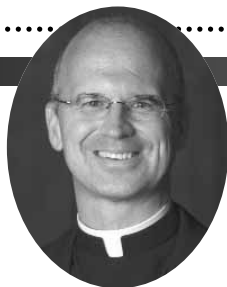
We believe our ministry to the Church and the world must be built upon the solid foun-

dation of the first two. Right now, Archbishop Plourde is calling us to consider a service with three main components: the poor, alienated Catholics and youth. All of these fit well with what we think the Lord himself has been saying to us.

It all sounds very interesting. We want above all to do the will of God. Please pray for us that we get it right. ☺

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*Fr. Bob Bedard is the founder of the Companions of the Cross.*



## FEATURE

by Roger Vandenakker

# How Time Flies

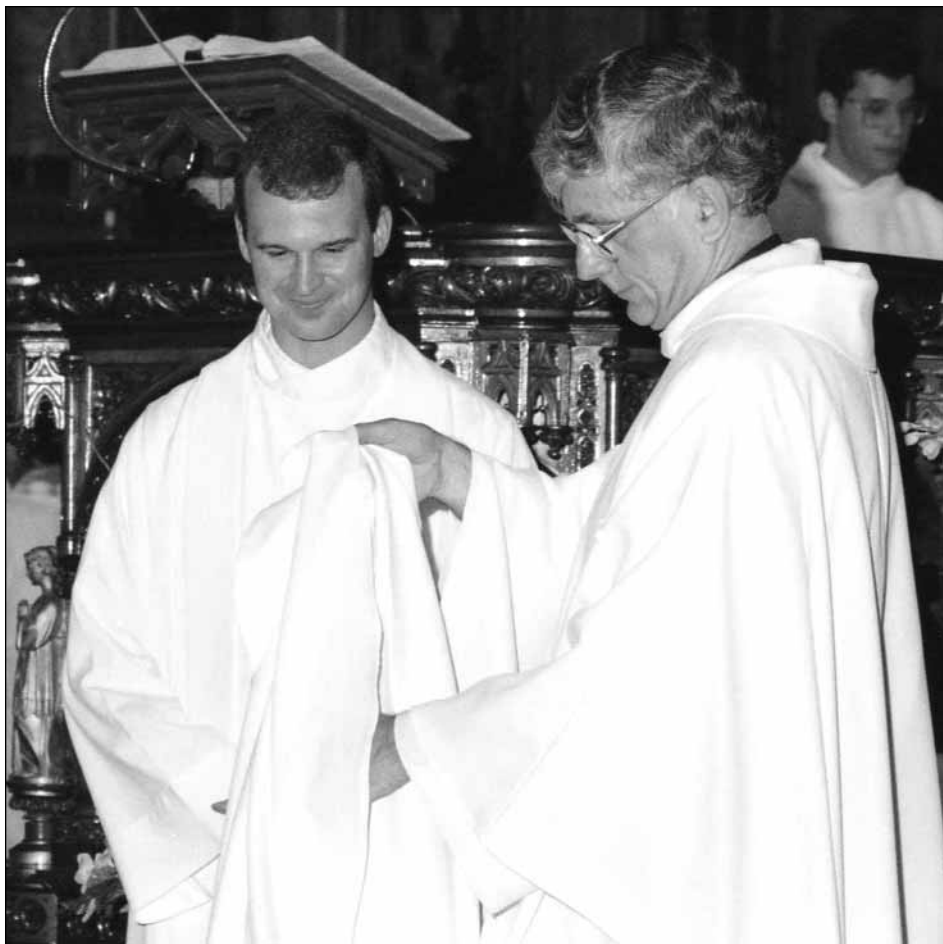
It's hard for me to grasp the fact that we are approaching the 25th anniversary of the foundation of our community, the Companions of the Cross, this May, 2010. Oh how the time flies! It seems so recent to me how the Lord began to inspire and found our community back in 1984/1985.

In the summer of 1984, I was moving back to Ottawa and preparing to enter the seminary after having completed my B.A. at St. Michael's College in Toronto. My call to the priesthood had come quite clearly and powerfully the previous summer while living in Toronto. Although I longed for some form of community life and support as a future priest at that time, I sensed the Lord directing me to the diocesan priesthood in Ottawa, my home town. In my personal prayer I felt a peace and sense that the Lord would take care of my need and desire for community somehow.

At that time, my own brother, John, was entering his final year of seminary in Ottawa. As well, Fr. Bob Bedard, the priest I most admired and looked up to, and who was a former teacher in high school and spiritual father of the charismatic prayer group I had been involved with all through my teens, was also in Ottawa.

In fact, my brother, Fr. Bob, and two other young men preparing to enter the seminary that fall had begun meeting weekly in January of 1984 as a "share group" to pray together and support each other in their vocations. Although I was not able to attend these meetings initially because I was still living in Toronto, I looked forward to being part of the group upon my return that August.

The fall of 1984 was an exciting time indeed. As a new seminarian at St. Paul's



*Fr. Roger being vested by Fr. Bob at his ordination.*

Seminary in Ottawa I witnessed Pope John Paul II's historic and extended visit to Canada in September. I was able to be present as he celebrated at an immense outdoor Mass at Lebreton Flats in Ottawa, as well as when he cruised up the Rideau Canal in the "Pope Boat" with thousands of enthusiastic people lining the shore.

Throughout the fall our share group continued meeting faithfully every Friday evening at the Catholic Renewal Centre where Fr. Bob was working at the time, and

then at St. Mary's Church after he was appointed as pastor and moved there at the end of October. I remember, vividly, how much I looked forward to these simple gatherings. The five of us would begin with a period of praise and worship in the charismatic expression with which we were all familiar. This was followed by a time of silence as we waited upon the Lord to speak to us as a group through inspirational images, words, senses, or Scripture. After this we took turns sharing personally how we sensed the Lord speaking in our own

lives and prayer during the previous week. We shared our joys and struggles quite freely and openly and concluded with laying hands and praying over each other individually.

There was a strong and mutual feeling of growing fraternity among as we gathered each week. Just praying, sharing, and being together was tremendously encouraging, affirming, and personally supportive. As we continued to meet and pray through the fall and into the winter of 1985 there was a growing sense that the Lord had a larger purpose for us than we had originally conceived when we first came together.

The first specific word or direction which we sensed the Lord giving us was that our fraternal relationships and meetings together should continue even after we were all ordained. The second sense we received was that we should also seek out ways to minister together as future priests. This sense was based on the mutual shared vision we had concerning the vital and pressing need for the Church to be renewed through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit which we had all personally experienced in our own lives. It simply became clear to us that the Lord could use us much more effectively if we ministered together as future priests rather than in isolation from one another.

The final word and direction which came to us in the spring of 1985 was that the Lord, in fact, wanted us not only to continue meeting but to actually live together as brothers in community after our ordination as priests. I remember the growing enthusiasm I felt in my spirit as we received each one of these “words” from the Lord in our meetings over those months.

Fr. Bob was the one who, finally, summarized these words and senses that we had been receiving and called our attention to

the implications they entailed; that the Lord, in fact, wanted to found a new community of priests among us with a vision to share our lives as brothers in the Lord and to work together for the renewal of the Church through a dynamic evangelization in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

At that time none of us realized what this would all entail or finally look like, but we were fired up in our spirits with great zeal and enthusiasm. There was no doubt in our hearts that the Lord was present and leading us in a powerful way. The future was full of hope, expectancy, and promise. God was on the move!

As I look back now 25 years later I continue to be awed and humbled by what the Lord has done with us and how we have grown and matured as a community of priests and seminarians. Not unlike a marriage we have experienced our own trials and challenges over the years. At times, we have struggled personally and corporately to remain faithful to our vision as a community; to lay down our lives for the Lord, for his Church, and for one another.

As I conclude these reflections two things stand out in my mind and heart. First of all I see the unchanging, merciful, and faithful love of God for us as men and as brothers over all these years, continually reminding us of our call and renewing us in his Spirit. And secondly, I stand in awe of the love, affirmation, support, and encouragement which we have received from the laity in our various parishes and ministries, and among our lay associates. It leaves me with a deep sense of gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise to the Lord, and hope for the future. ☩

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*Fr. Roger Vandenakker is the pastor of St. Mary's parish in Ottawa.*

## St. Mary's Parish Jubilee Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, as we celebrate this Jubilee Year of the arrival of Fr. Bob Bedard and the founding of the Companions of the Cross, we thank you for your abundant goodness and the great love you have shown us over these past 25 years. This year we ask you, again, to renew your wonders in our midst as by a New Pentecost.

We surrender and give you full permission to accomplish your perfect will in our lives, and we open wide the doors of our hearts to a deeper outpouring of your life-giving Spirit of love, mercy, healing and grace.

Come, Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us. Melt us, mould us, fill us, and use us for the glory of the Father.

Enkindle in us an ever deeper hunger and thirst for prayer, and grant us the courage to wholeheartedly embrace our vocation to holiness as disciples of Jesus Christ, manifesting our love for you by laying down our lives in love and service of one another.

We make our prayer in your name, Lord Jesus, with childlike trust and confidence, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, our Blessed Mother and Queen. Amen.



## FEATURE

by Heidi Desrochers

The last two years of my life have been a real test of faith. I often refer to them as an emotional rollercoaster ride during which I experienced moments of intense sadness, anguish, and pain, as well as moments of deep inner peace, joy, and consolation that only the Lord can provide. My faith and trust in God, my perseverance in prayer, and the prayers of many others pulled me through; however, I admit that it was not always easy.

My journey began on October 19, 2007 following a pelvic laparoscopy, a minimally-invasive surgery to diagnose and treat endometriosis (a painful condition that can also affect a woman's fertility). My surgeon announced to me in the recovery room that I had advanced endometriosis, possible polycystic ovarian disease, and blocked fallopian tubes. My first question was: "Will we be able to have children?" I was shocked and devastated when she answered that it was unlikely.

My husband Pierre and I were then referred to the Ottawa Fertility Centre in December 2007. We were extremely reluctant to go there, as this centre specializes in assistive reproductive technologies (ART), such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), which we strongly oppose. The Church teaches that these procedures are immoral as babies are not conceived through the physical expression of love between husband and wife, some embryos are almost always killed, and children are treated as commodities to be produced for our needs. We were hoping for another option, such as surgery to unblock the fallopian tubes. The doctor admitted that there was a lack in microsurgical expertise in Canada and considering all the other conditions I had, our only option was IVF. He explained that conceiving naturally would be nothing short of a miracle. At this point, I felt

# My Journey through Infertility



completely abandoned by the health care system. It was difficult for me to believe that such a conclusion could be drawn after one surgery without conducting any other tests.

Thanks to my brother, Fr. Christian Riesbeck, as well as some parishioners of our parish (St. Monica's), we soon learned about a morally acceptable option of overcoming infertility called "NaProTECHNOLOGY" (Natural Procreative Technology) that is based on the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System (CrMS), a standardized modification of the Billings Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning (NFP). We ini-

tially heard about this at the 2006 Humanae Vitae Conference from inspiring doctors affiliated with the Marguerite Bourgeoys Family Centre in Toronto who practice NaProTECHNOLOGY. When my brother first approached me with this information, I felt overwhelmed and was not very receptive. Part of me was not able to accept the fact that I was struggling with infertility. It was still a foreign concept to me, something that other couples may experience, but not us! At times I felt angry, discouraged, and distant from God, but I knew deep down that it was in these moments, that I had to turn to him and trust in him the most. We therefore decided to learn the CrMS through a practitioner in Ottawa and were extremely blessed to meet a great Catholic family physician who was familiar with NaProTECHNOLOGY and willing to help us.

The next few months, from spring to fall of 2008, were probably the most stressful of my life. I had to juggle work and multiple medical appointments and tests. Pierre and I also needed to find a good micro surgeon who could properly diagnose and treat the underlying causes of infertility. After much prayer and research and under the guidance of our family physician, the Lord led us to Dr. Thomas Hilgers, the founder of the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Nebraska and the pioneer of NaProTECHNOLOGY. Because of his tremendous accomplishments and commitment to promoting a culture of life, Dr. Hilgers was appointed in 1994 to full membership in the Pontifical Academy for Life by Pope John Paul II and received many prestigious awards. We were in good hands! He studied my case and I was booked for surgery with him in October 2008.

Pierre and I were very hopeful knowing that Dr. Hilgers uses specialized tech-

niques that are not performed in Canada, that his success rate was very high, and that we would finally get clear answers. Nevertheless, as I waited for surgery, I did have moments of anxiety fearing that this might all fail. I could not bear the thought of trying to conceive for years on end without success and living in a constant state of uncertainty. The struggle of infertility also challenged Pierre and me in our marriage. It was difficult to let go and not think about it on a constant basis, to focus on nurturing other aspects of our relationship and have fun and laugh too! The answer to our struggles was to persevere in prayer, to continue praising God and thanking him for our blessings even when it was difficult, and to surrender our fertility to God.

In Omaha, we had a very powerful faith experience and felt the presence of God all around us. I brought with me a second class relic of St. Gerard Majella (known for miracles related to infertility) and other religious medals and prayer cards that caring friends had given to us. We had previously attended two healing Masses led by Fr. Fernando Suarez for the healing of my infertility. We were also incredibly blessed to have many friends and prayer warriors interceding for us. We definitely felt their prayers in Omaha and throughout our entire journey through infertility and we are so grateful to them. When I awoke from my surgery, I felt very peaceful and was pleasantly surprised to have a praise and worship song ("Beautiful One") in my head that I had only heard a few times before! I just wanted to get up and praise God without even knowing the outcome of the surgery. In the recovery room, Pierre shared the good news with me. The surgery was a success and our chances of conceiving were very good! We cried tears of joy and clung to this newfound hope.



Less than a month following the surgery, I was starting to feel anxious again and did not want to be too hopeful, as I feared disappointment. These feelings were all part of the emotional rollercoaster I had been riding for the past year. There were many ups and downs but the Lord was with me through it all. At this time, I attended my first Women of Bethany retreat. The theme of the retreat was "Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, persevere in prayer" (Rm 12:12). It was so appropriate for me! I let the Lord enter my heart on this retreat and shared all my deepest feelings, fears, and desires with him. I went to Confession, which was also a very powerful experience, and spent some time praying before our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. By the end of the retreat, I had completely surrendered to God and felt as light as a feather. I returned home to my husband as a changed woman, full of peace and joy, praising God!

Approximately two weeks later, on December 2, 2008, I was blessed with the best news of my life: I was pregnant!!! Pierre and I were elated that it happened so quickly following the surgery. I cherished every single moment of my pregnancy, as I felt our miracle baby growing and moving inside me. The pregnancy went very well and it was a very special time for Pierre and me. We made it a point

to have some time for personal prayer on a daily basis, something we had been struggling to achieve over the years. As a result, we drew even closer to God and to each other.

Our beautiful baby boy, Daniel Raymond Joseph Desrochers, was born on August 11, 2009. It could have been a different outcome which I know would have been difficult for me to accept. Hence, through this experience, the Lord has called me to a deeper trust in him and to continually surrender my life to him even when it is not easy and when circumstances in life arise that are not according to **my** plan. This will definitely be a lifelong journey. Yet, I truly believe that whatever the Lord wills, is what will make me happiest as the Lord says in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe!" The Lord has been so patient with me even when I doubted him. I am so grateful to him for all the blessings in my life and for always being there for me especially when I feel like giving up. I will praise the Lord all the days of my life, for he is so good! ☺

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*Heidi and her husband Pierre are parishioners at St. Monica's parish in Nepean. She is a member of their Sanctity of Life Group.*



## FEATURE

by Anne Belanger

# *Credidimus Caritati*

(We have put our faith in love)

**T**his Latin saying is the motto of the Billings Ovulation Method Research & Reference Centre of Australia. I've chosen it as the title of this article because I believe it represents the daily walk of each of our lives. Every day, we are called to put our faith in love, relying on him who created us to direct our every thought, word, and action. Most often, this love is a gentle prompting, a whispering in the heart.

Indeed, I believe this is how I became involved in teaching the Billings Ovulation Method nearly 20 years ago. The Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) is one of several Natural Family Planning methods. Though I hadn't an inclination to teach the method, my husband, Denis and I were invited to attend a series of local workshops which initiated the process of becoming a Billings Instructor. In speaking with my spiritual director about it, he encouraged me to follow this gentle prompting, as it seemed to be a movement of the Holy Spirit in my heart. I was accredited in 1994. Since 2003, I've been training and updating BOM Instructors through workshops and the WOOMB International Online Teacher Training Correspondence Course.

Through the generous support of the NFP Association of Toronto and local benefactors, I had the opportunity to travel to Melbourne, Australia in May 2009, to attend the Inaugural John J. Billings Memorial Lecture entitled, "Nature and Grace and the Billings Ovulation Method". This conference hosted 150 people, 75 of whom were International

delegates from 22 countries. Fr. Joseph Hattie, OMI of Halifax, NS and I were the two Canadian delegates. The Most Reverend Peter J. Elliott, Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne, provided the Opening Address, reminding us we were ministers of life and love in our efforts to promote and teach the BOM to all we meet. Professor Pilar Vigil of Chile, Gynaecologist/Obstetrician, with a PhD in Biological Sciences, was the conference's main lecturer. She works extensively in the field of Reproductive Medicine and Endocrinology. Her talks, entitled "Nature and Grace in Women's Reproductive Health", and "Nature and Grace Channelled through the Billings Ovulation Method Teacher", linked together Fertility Awareness through the bio-chemical responses of the woman's physiology and the vocation of each human person to make of himself a gift to the other, as expressed so beautifully by Pope John Paul II.

The BOM is universal and morally acceptable to all cultures; being used in over 200 countries. International and Australian delegates reported on the presence of the BOM throughout the world. Of particular interest to me were the reports given by the Australian Internet Teaching and Teacher-Training Correspondence Course Supervisors, as these are both areas of training which I supervise here in Canada. Another Australian delegate, responsible for the Billings display booth at WYD 2008, recounted the experience of witnessing three construction workers raise a makeshift steel cross to the cheers of thousands of pilgrims as they greeted Pope Benedict XVI. Over 200,000 pilgrims visited the Billings booth, many of whom were greeted by Dr. Lyn Billings herself. Two Asian delegates from Hong Kong shared their experiences as transla-



From left, Fr. Joseph Hattie, Dr. Lyn Billings, Bishop Peter Elliott, Anne Belanger

tors and teachers of the BOM in Hong Kong and mainland China. The Chinese government has been reliant on artificial contraception and abortion to maintain its One Child Policy. Since the preliminary trial of the BOM in China in 1990, the government has been significantly impressed with the method. So much so, that the Chinese Ministry of Health introduced the BOM to the country in 1995. The results of the method have shown it to be more highly successful in the avoidance of pregnancy than artificial means of contraception.

Dr. Lek-Lim Chan of Malaysia delivered the final conference lecture before Bishop Elliott's Closing Mass with his presentation of the late Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body". In learning the beautiful, intricate design of the woman's reproductive physiology, man's respect for her dignity and her sexuality increases.

The Billings Ovulation Method is based in the science of the woman's physiology, allowing her to observe current characteristics relative to her fertility to achieve or postpone pregnancy. The freedom obtained by this knowledge counters the fear many women experience in wishing

to avoid a pregnancy. The method is attuned to the patterns prevalent in a woman's cycle so it can be successfully applied in all stages of her reproductive life. In charting follicular activity, we're able to help women notice any irregularities in their cycles. We encourage our clients to review abnormalities seen in their charting with their doctors, to ensure they receive the right diagnosis and treatment of them. In some cases, early stages of carcinoma of the cervix have been detected through the use of the chart, allowing the condition to receive immediate medical attention. Likewise, serious medical conditions requiring the avoidance of pregnancy can be managed through the use of the BOM.

Intense training commenced for the international and local teachers as we began our Teacher Training Workshops with a day of presentations from several International doctors. Dr. Lyn Billings delivered a report from Dr. Eric Odeblad of Sweden on the existence of possible relative characteristics, enhancing a woman's awareness of her fertility. Dr. Pilar Vigil talked about treatment options for ovarian dysfunction, in particular with regard to polycystic ovary syndrome. Dr. Mary Martin of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is an NFP Gynaecologist/Endocrinologist. She spoke of the diagnostic benefits of charting fertility. Initially having opened a Billings Clinic in the Oklahoma City Hospital for the benefit of those struggling with low fertility, she shared her experience of opening the Billings Center for Fertility and Reproductive Medicine in St. Anthony's Catholic Hospital, Oklahoma in April 2009. Dr. Jorge Alvarado of Chile highlighted the achievements made in his country to unify the teaching and translation of the authentic Billings Ovulation Method. Dr. Lek Lim Chan shared his clinical experience from Malaysia, and Dr. Mark Whitty of Dublin, Ireland closed the day with his lecture, "The Big Picture: BOM Teachers can change the World", helping us to see the vital importance the

Billings Ovulation Method has in promoting the culture of life throughout the world.

I attended the Advanced Teacher Training Workshop. This workshop concentrated on hormonal activity in cyclical variants reflected in the woman's chart. The more we understand the science involved in a woman's fertility, the more refined the method becomes, and the simpler it is for the woman to use. Interestingly enough, professionals and intellectuals seem to have the most difficulty with it, as they deem the method too simple for serious consideration.

The Education Committee of WOOMB International presented the first evening session. WOOMB International, the World Organization of Ovulation Method Billings, is the governing body of the Billings Ovulation Method. Its mandate is to insure the method is taught correctly worldwide, through the policies and criteria established by its Education Committee. Their research and reference center, the OMR&RC is located in Melbourne, Australia. As one of the members of the WOOMB Canada Education Committee, I was grateful for their direction and visible dedication to the organization. At the Teacher-Training Correspondence Course session, I was given the newest version of the Correspondence Course. This course was developed to train and update teachers over the web that may be unable to attend teacher-training workshops. I also had the opportunity to review a high school Christian Sexuality Program developed by Melbourne BOM teachers under the direction of Bishop Elliott, called, "Loving for Life". The Billings teachers present this program in their local high schools. I was graciously given its outline, as I hope to be able to introduce the program to our own high school youth.

Our culture has lulled us into accepting that self-control is undesirable, as it believes it's unachievable. Indulgences

are pervasive, coming in many forms. Society inundates us with the suggestion that instant gratification is the most satisfaction this world can offer us. Natural Family Planning is counter-cultural, causing us to follow the natural rhythm of the woman's physiology, respecting natural law as it applies to the procreation of human life. Some people may view it as a natural contraceptive. But I believe that's akin to saying that since Euthanasia and natural death produce the same results, they're morally equivalent. "But to experience the gift of married love while respecting the laws of conception is to acknowledge that one is not the master of the sources of life but rather the minister of the design established by the Creator" (*Humane Vitae*, 13). Contraception is, "the direct interruption of the generative process" (HV, 14), and consequently, to the unitive one. Teaching the BOM is a witness of my faith.

I encourage all women to learn the method. There is no charge to learn the BOM; Dr. Lyn Billings believes that every woman has a right to know the physiology of her own body. We teach the method to any woman, every woman. My husband has said (tongue in cheek), "Natural Family Planning is the best kept secret in North America." Well, every chart tells a story, and the BOM is a story worth telling.

Please address all inquiries and comments to [annebelanger.bom@gmail.com](mailto:annebelanger.bom@gmail.com). For information on the Billings Ovulation Method please visit:  
WOOMB International:  
[www.woomb.com](http://www.woomb.com)  
WOOMB Canada: [www.woomb.ca](http://www.woomb.ca)  
BOMA-USA: [www.boma-usa.org](http://www.boma-usa.org)  
Billings LIFE: [www.woomb.org](http://www.woomb.org)  
NFPA Ontario: [www.naturalfamilyplanning.ca](http://www.naturalfamilyplanning.ca)



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*Anne Belanger has been teaching the BOM for 15 years. She and her family live in Gatineau, Quebec.*



## FEATURE

by Fr. Jamie Utronkie

# St. John Vianney

**W**ho in their right mind would want to be a priest in this day and age? The pay is low, the work is hard and you are not even allowed to get married. In an age where the Church is under seemingly constant persecution while the snares of materialism and secularism take over our society, why even consider becoming a priest? Perhaps it made sense in ages past when times were easier and priests were more respected and had a greater reputation?

Maybe a reflection on the life of the patron saint of priests will help shed some light onto why this is such a great vocation ... You might ask yourself why Saint Jean-Marie Vianney is the patron saint of priests. From a quick glance at his life, there is not too much that is particularly outstanding about him that should earn him the title of being the patron saint of priests.

Jean-Marie Vianney was born on May 8, 1786 in Dardilly, France to Matthieu and Marie Vianney. He was the third of six children and grew up on a farm. He was not well educated and not considered intellectually bright either, part of which could be attributed to the fact that he was raised during the French Revolution, a time when education and schooling had been interrupted. However as Jean-Marie got older and attended seminary school in hopes of pursuing a career in priesthood, his grades were low and he needed constant tutoring to pass his subjects. Nevertheless, he was a stubborn man who

persevered through all of his trials and difficulties and was ordained a priest at the age of 29.

Besides being ordained at the same age as St. Jean-Marie, identifying with having a similar stubborn nature, as well as having an alleged “physical resemblance” to him, I am still not sure how to compare myself or relate to him spiritually. While I have always had great respect for priests, even as a child, Jean-Marie regarded priests to be “heroes”. As I mentioned, he lived during the time of the French Revolution, which was a time when the Church and the State were at odds about balance of power and leadership within the country. The result was a conflict that led to an imposed dechristianisation of France.

As part of the Revolution, the state confiscated Church properties as well as took ownership of civil responsibilities that had previously belonged to the Church (such as having responsibility of maintaining birth, marriage and death registers as well many educational institutions and hospitals). Only a few years before the Revolution, as much as 95% of the population of France were practicing Roman Catholics. The Church had not only influenced spiritual affairs but also affairs pertaining to matters of everyday life. Then within a few short years, the story would become painted in a very different way.

By the time Jean-Marie Vianney was eight years old he witnessed events that would nurture his own desire to become a priest. The Vianney family had provided shelter for refugee priests since all clergy were threatened with death or imprisonment if they continued to exercise the rights that came with their ordination. Celebrating the sacraments was illegal as well as celebrating any kind of religious holiday or promoting any kind of Christian symbol like a crucifix or reli-

gious icon. Many thousands of clergy were executed or deported out of France, leaving many of the 40,000 churches in France empty and without the service of a priest.

I want you to imagine for a minute what this world would look like without priests. Sure, priests have made their share of mistakes. I acknowledge this. We have seen evidence of this in our own country, provinces and dioceses. Priests are also sinners just like the rest of humanity. Yet a priest is able to bring to us something, or should I say “Someone” that no one else can. By the power of his ordination, a priest can bring Jesus Christ himself to us in the sacraments.

When the Revolution was going on in France, a handful of clergy were able to escape execution and deportation by disguising themselves and hiding in the homes of the faithful. As mentioned, the Vianney family farm was one such location where clergy would come and hide. In the dark hours of the night, members of the faithful would come from near and far so that they could attend Mass in abandoned barns and sheds. Blankets would be used to cover windows so that the lights would not be seen by soldiers that were lurking around looking to knock off anyone attempting to support the Church and its beliefs. Young Jean-Marie witnessed many priests risk their lives so that they could provide sacraments to those members of the faithful who were desperate to receive those divine graces that can only come from receiving the sacraments. No wonder why he saw priests to be “heroes”. These particular men had taken their calling and vocation so seriously that they would not let anything compromise their faith and duty to bring Christ to the people (even though the State had condemned such activity).

After the Revolution had ended and Jean-Marie was 20 years old, he himself joined the seminary after being convinced of his divine calling to the priesthood. As mentioned he struggled with his studies but was ordained at the age of 29 and was assigned to be the Curé in the town of Ars in France.

His first assignment was to minister in this small town of 230 people but the effects of the Revolution had left him a very discouraging and seemingly hopeless ministry base. His people were not educated about Christianity and so lived in a perpetual state of religious ignorance. Sundays were not about doing holy and pious activities, they were instead about drinking and dancing in taverns and working in the fields.

When these people would attend church he would exhort them in his homilies about the dangers of profaning the Day of the Lord (Sunday) and would even refuse absolution to those who would not respond to these exhortations. His intention was not to exercise power and control over these people but rather to express his concern for the state of their souls and his own desire for them to benefit fully from the graces that are offered in the sacraments.

Jean-Marie Vianney took his priesthood seriously. He offered strict but loving counsel to those who came to him for ministry. He educated his people about the truths of the faith and was more strict with himself than he was with them by his own prayer, fasting and acts of mortification. All of these spiritual sacrifices made him a model Christian to those who came to him for advice. He quickly became an example for his own people as well as people from other towns such that many came to him for spiritual advice and he

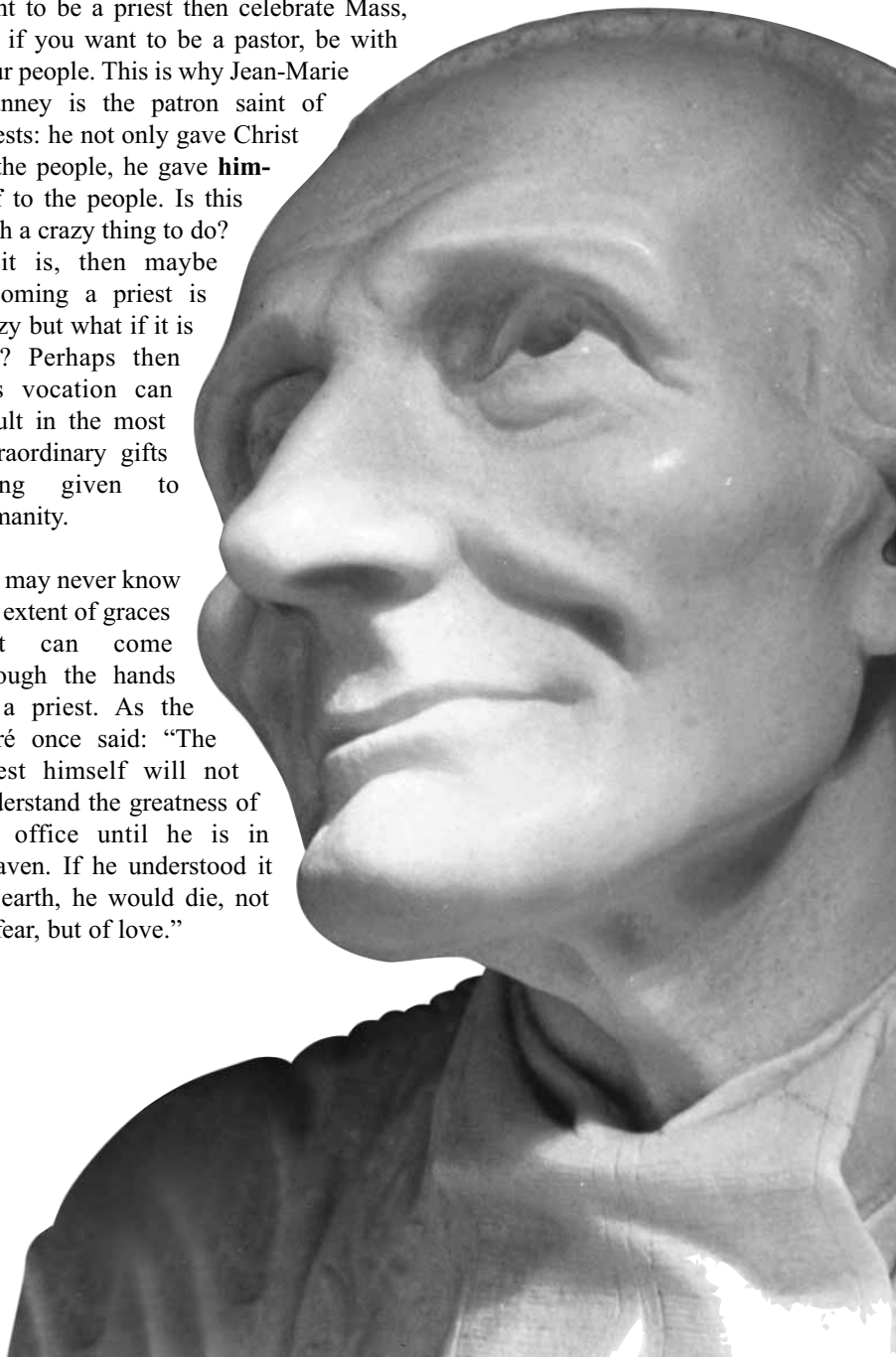
would spend between 12 and 16 hours a day in the confessional hearing confessions.

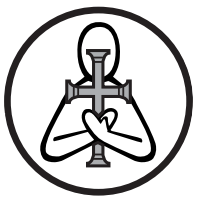
A priest friend once said to me that if you want to be a priest then celebrate Mass, but if you want to be a pastor, be with your people. This is why Jean-Marie Vianney is the patron saint of priests: he not only gave Christ to the people, he gave **himself** to the people. Is this such a crazy thing to do? If it is, then maybe becoming a priest is crazy but what if it is not? Perhaps then this vocation can result in the most extraordinary gifts being given to humanity.

We may never know the extent of graces that can come through the hands of a priest. As the Curé once said: "The priest himself will not understand the greatness of his office until he is in Heaven. If he understood it on earth, he would die, not of fear, but of love."

St. Jean-Marie Vianney... Pray for us. ☺

.....  
*Fr. Jamie Utronkie was ordained to the priesthood in the spring of 2009.*





# Companions of the Cross

P r i e s t s 2 0 0 9 - 2 0 1 0



**Fr. Rob Arsenault**  
(Temporary Commitment)  
Kingston, ON Ord. 1994



**Fr. Galen Bank**  
Glenavon, SK Ord. 2001



**Fr. Bob Bedard**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1955



**Fr. John Paul Bolger**  
Cambridge, ON Ord. 2008



**Fr. Daren Bryk**  
Edmonton, AB Ord. 2000



**Fr. Francis Ching**  
Toronto, ON Ord. 2005



**Fr. Brian Christie**  
Sarnia, ON Ord. 2005



**Fr. Tim Devine**  
Kitchener, ON Ord. 2002



**Fr. Terry Donahue**  
Oakland, NJ Ord. 2000



**Fr. Francis Donnelly**  
Montreal, QC Ord. 1979



**Fr. John Fletcher**  
Buffalo, NY Ord. 2001



**Fr. Francis Frankovich**  
Riverside, CA Ord. 1968



**Fr. Jerry Gauvreau**  
Lindsay, ON Ord. 2001



**Fr. Mark Goring**  
Pembroke, ON Ord. 2002



**Fr. Dennis Hayes**  
Guelph, ON Ord. 1986



**Fr. Randy Hendriks**  
Vineland, ON Ord. 2002



**Fr. Pierre Ingram**  
Guelph, ON Ord. 1995



**Fr. Rick Jaworski**  
Winnipeg, MB Ord. 1990



**Fr. John Likozar**  
Toronto, ON Ord. 2000



**Fr. Simon Lobo**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 2009



**Fr. Allan MacDonald**  
St. Raphael's, ON Ord. 1994



**Fr. Yves Marchildon**  
Victoire, SK Ord. 1996



**Fr. Carlos Martins**  
Kitchener, ON Ord. 2009



**Fr. Scott McCaig**  
Kamloops, BC Ord. 1995



**Fr. Jim McGillivray**  
Kingston, ON Ord. 1969



**Fr. Bernard Messier**  
Stoney Point, ON Ord. 2008



**Fr. Michael Minifie**  
South Mountain, ON Ord. 2005



**Fr. Charles Orchard**  
Cobourg, ON Ord. 1995



**Fr. Christian Riesbeck**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1996



**Fr. Mike Scherrey**  
Fort Smith, AR Ord. 2005



# Companions of the Cross

P r i e s t s 2 0 0 9 - 2 0 1 0



**Fr. Jeff Shannon**  
Sudbury, ON Ord. 1997



**Fr. Ben St. Croix**  
Kenora, ON Ord. 2001



**Fr. Fernando Suarez**  
Batangas, Phillipines Ord. 2002



**Fr. Marc Syrenne**  
Saskatoon, SK Ord. 1997



**Fr. Jamie Utronkie**  
Killaloe, ON Ord. 2009



**Fr. John Vandenakker**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1985



**Fr. Roger Vandenakker**  
Ottawa, ON Ord. 1989



**Fr. Ed Wade**  
Philadelphia, PA Ord. 1972



**Fr. Sean Wenger**  
Vernon, BC Ord. 1995



# Companions of the Cross

S e m i n a r i a n s 2 0 0 9 - 2 0 1 0



**Jorge Alvarado**  
Monterrey, Mexico



**Antonio Aquino**  
Houston, TX



**Anthony Cafik**  
Victoria, BC



**Ruben Campbell**  
Saltillo, Mexico



**J.P. DeFleuriot**  
Johannesburg, South Africa



**Paul DeKroon**  
San Francisco, CA



**Lawrence Hyginus**  
Toronto, ON



**Kenneth Lao**  
Mississauga, ON



**Jim Lowe**  
Troy, MI



**Stephen Marsh**  
Stratford, ON



**Bryan Sabourin**  
Ottawa, ON



**Deacon David Bergeron**  
Granby, QC



# DONOR RESPONSE FORM

*I would like to partner with the Companions of the Cross in the formation of candidates for the priesthood. I have indicated below the method of support that I prefer. (To view our Privacy Policy please visit our website.)*

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STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ PROV/STATE \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## METHOD OF SUPPORT

### ONE TIME DONATION(S)

# 1

#### DONATION BY CHEQUE(S)

Payable to the *Companions of the Cross*

- Cheque in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.
- Post dated cheque(s) in the amount(s) of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is/are enclosed.

#### DONATION BY CREDIT CARD

VISA  MC Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CARD# \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRY DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

### AUTOMATIC MONTHLY DONATION

# 2

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- \$25  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I have attached a VOID cheque.
- This donation is made on behalf of:
- an Individual  a Business

I may revoke my authorization at any time, subject to providing notice of 30 days. I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAD Agreement. To obtain a sample cancellation form, for more information on my right to cancel a PAD agreement, or to obtain more information on my recourse rights I may contact my financial institution or visit [www.cdnpay.ca](http://www.cdnpay.ca).

#### MONTHLY DONATION BY CREDIT CARD

\$25  \$50  \$100  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

VISA  MC

CARD # \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRY DATE \_\_\_\_\_

#### \* PLEASE COMPLETE

I hereby authorize the Companions of the Cross to arrange automatic withdrawals from my chequing account or credit card, **on the \_\_\_\_\_ (1st or 15th) day of each month** for payment of my pledge. I understand that I may cancel this authorization at any time with written notice.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your generous gift! It will go directly to support seminarian formation, evangelization, and renewal.*

- I would like a free subscription to the Companions quarterly newsletter
- Please pray for the following special intention: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form, place in postage-paid envelope provided and mail to: Companions of the Cross, 199 Bayswater Ave., Ottawa, ON K1Y 2G5. In the U.S., please mail to: Companions of the Cross, 6725 Reed Road, Houston, TX 77087-6830. *Your support of our community is very much appreciated!*



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# Logan's Story

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Once a year, we usually provide you with the wonderful story of the Companions of the Cross annual fundraising event in Houston, Texas, this year held on September 19th at the Catholic Charismatic Center, honouring Father Francis Donnelly and Father Carlos Martins. Father Francis is celebrating 30 years of ordination, while Father Carlos is newly ordained, both serving in the Galveston-Houston diocese.

The evening was yet another huge success, emceed by Gallery Furniture owner Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale, and raised over \$80,000 for the Community, thanks to many generous donors, not the least of which was Mattress Mack. A dedicated group of Lay Associates volunteered their time, tirelessly, again. We truly need to thank this group for an amazing event!

We would like to share the most touching part of the evening, which highlights the human spirit, and the valuable reason we all need to believe that Jesus Christ is alive and working in the world through me and you.

Mattress Mack shared the following story in his talks, and we wanted to share it with you. Those in attendance were truly moved.

In the spring, Mattress Mack's store suffered a four-alarm fire that destroyed his warehouse. A young boy, seeing reports of the destruction on the local news stopped by the store and wanted to help. He dropped a bag of pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars he had been saving to buy an I-Pod on the counter, because he thought Mack needed the help. Ever busy, Mack turned his back for a moment to deal with something in the store, and the young

boy was gone, leaving his bag of money behind.

Mack went to the local news to find this boy, who it turns out, had saved over \$200 for his new I-Pod, but thought nothing of giving it to a person in need. To make a long story short, Mack tracked down 11-year old Logan Burnaman to thank him for his kindness. Gallery Furniture, in turn, donated Logan's money to a local charity, and bought Logan his I-Pod Touch and gave him gift certificates for the I-Store.

Having been raised and taught by priests and nuns, Mack was thrilled to hear that Logan is a student at St. Thomas More Catholic School, and that values and beliefs are still emphasized in our Catholic education system.



What made Logan's story so unique is that he is a true believer in giving unto others and the spirit of helping his fellow man, a spirit that he shows in all his actions. When speaking with Logan's family, Mack learned that young Logan once held a garage

sale of his toys to raise money for a friend in his class diagnosed with spina bifida, amongst a host of other charitable and giving campaigns that young Logan would come up with.

We share Mack's admiration of this young man. To quote one of the local newspapers, "Just because he has a lot of money doesn't mean that he doesn't need someone who knows you care," Logan said.

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## YEAR OF THE PRIEST

*During this Year of the Priest we are running stories of how our priests have touched people's lives in their ministry. If you have a story you would like to share with us, please contact Christine Labrosse our Managing Editor.*

### The Companions' Touch

by Richard and Kerry Brine

The priests of the Companions of the Cross have touched our lives in so many ways. First off, there would be no "us" if it were not for the Lord working through Fr. Bob Bedard. My parents (Richard) had been to a Charismatic conference in Eastern Canada, where Fr. Bob had been speaking about Medjugorje and they were blown away. Shortly after, they made their first and second pilgrimages, and took me along for the third. That was where I had my major conversion. After that I moved to Ottawa and was looking for a Catholic Church in which to put down roots. When my mom saw Fr. Bob on the cover of the *New Covenant* magazine, she directed me to St. Mary's. The next Sunday Fr. Bob was preaching a fiery sermon on being open to more of the Holy Spirit; I was convicted and found myself in the basement attending a Life in Spirit Seminar that Wednesday. Not only did I grow in my faith, but I met my future wife, Kerry.

If you have been around St. Mary's when Fr. Bob was preaching on Vocation Sunday, you would have been familiar with the story of a young man who would always avoid Fr. Bob going up one aisle of the church while Fr. Bob went down the other in their little "dance". That was me. I knew that Fr. Bob had a way with young men who would often find themselves in seminary soon after encountering this magnetism. It was not until Kerry and I were engaged that I felt I could safely get to know Fr. Bob.

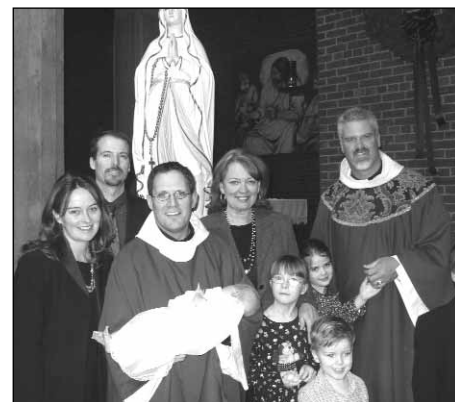
During our engagement I began to see Fr. Bob for spiritual direction and help. On

one occasion he heard my life-long confession and I left feeling more free than ever before. In fact I felt like a child again and found myself climbing trees in the experimental farm. He exemplified God the Father's unconditional love like only Fr. Bob can do. He married us in 1995 and we have both loved him dearly ever since.

Over the years we have gotten to know and journey with a few of the priests and seminarians of the Companions and every encounter has left us richer. Every relationship we have with the Companions has blessed us, whether it be in a reading group, a formation class, dinner at chez Brine, on a retreat, or just hanging out, we always come away knowing God more, loving God more and wanting to give ourselves away a little more, to be radical for the Lord in our own vocation.

We are living out our vocations alongside each other. These are real men who have given up their whole lives for Jesus. Becoming friends with these men has challenged us to do the same within our own vocation. They challenge us to say "yes!" to God every day - to whatever his plans are for our lives, for whatever he wants us to do. How can we do anything less when we see it modelled for us. They struggle, but they persevere, they pray...hard. Nothing makes us happier than to hear our children say "I want to do whatever God wants me to do". They see it lived out in such a full way. All of our teaching at home and religious instruction would not amount to much if the kids did not have role models like we see in the Companion priests.

Our children have been baptized by a beloved Companion priest, three have been confirmed by Companion priests, received their First Communion, and 99%



*Brine Family with Fr. Galen Bank and Fr. Scott McCaig.*

of their confessions have been to Companion priests. Who knows what God has in store for them but it will probably involve a Companion priest whether it be marriage or religious life. We have been blessed to have befriended more than one of the Companions of the Cross and so the kids have had lots of fun hanging out and relating with them. These kids are being formed and instructed first and foremost by us it's true, but what a confirmation it is to see faith lived out in such a radical way! We see a real symbiosis happening. We need these priests, and they need us. We believe they need to see us living out our own vocations as a married couple, struggling and yet persevering, growing and surrendering. We are a confirmation of their vocation and their sacrifice. They need our "yes" to God as much as we need theirs. We need to support each other, and in many ways share our lives with each other as God calls us. ☺

*Kerry and Richard Brine have been married for 14 years; have five children ranging in age from two to 13 and worship at St. Mary's parish.*

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# Community Modelling

by Tracy and Andrew Emmons

Recently our family celebrated the anniversary of our daughter's Baptism by lighting her baptismal candle. As we took out her candle, the name of the priest who baptised her caught our attention. We thought to ourselves, "Funny, he has baptized all four of our children and con-celebrated at our wedding." Upon reflection, we realized this is not just a "funny" coincidence but rather a symbol of the support we have received from the Companions of the Cross. Through their dedication to their priest and parish communities, we have grown in our understanding of how to live out community within our own family.

We have "grown up" being parishioners at a Companions of the Cross parish. Meeting each other as facilitators of the youth ministry program at St Maurice, we've been single, engaged, married and become parents through a wonderful nine years. Although the last decade has brought about significant change in our lives; we have always received steadfast support and examples of community living from the Companions of the Cross.

Needlessly to say our life changes have been marked by sacraments. It has been an incredible blessing to receive weekly Eucharist, Reconciliation and the Sacrament of Marriage from the same priest. How wonderful that all of our children could receive their Baptism from this priest as well! Through the intimacy of these sacraments we definitely feel a connection to him and feel truly supported regardless of our life stage. We view this connection as an example of how to support one another with love, commitment and dedication, an action we try to model in our family life.

For our family, the dedication to community modelled by the Companions of the Cross priests has been followed up with instruction. Homilies and personal conversations with Companions of the Cross priests have challenged us to live out our faith at a deeper level. For example, a recent homily on steps to facilitate conflict resolution provoked a thoughtful conversation in our home and a renewed effort to resolve conflict in a healthy manner. Also, our family has benefitted from family ministries at St. Maurice by doing specific activities that have helped us live out our faith at home. These conversations, homilies and family ministries have taught us how to live, share and pray as a stronger family unit.

The support we feel from the Companions of the Cross priests is not limited to good times – they have been a blessing to our family during difficult times as well. Periodically we have shared with a



*Emmons Family with Fr. Yves Marchildon and Fr. Galen Bank*

Companions of the Cross priest about a difficulty we were experiencing, and immediately received prayer from that priest. One instance which comes to mind is when one of our children was born with a congenital heart defect. Upon mentioning this individually to several Companions of the Cross priests, they all stopped and prayed for our daughter in the moment. Words from the Companions

of the Cross's website, "We will lay hands on those in need if they are present" have definitely been experienced firsthand by our family. Experiencing prayerful support has encouraged our family to offer up our difficulties quickly and to lay hands on one another when we are experiencing trials.

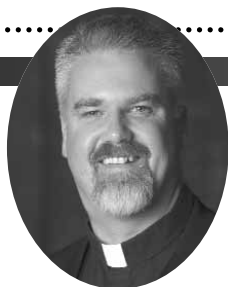
Support from the Companions of the Cross priests has sometimes been in unconventional ways. Several years ago we had a large willow tree in our backyard trimmed which left large logs of wood that needed chopping. Not long after its mention, a Companions of the Cross priest arrived with an axe ready to chop the wood. He happily returned a week later with a chainsaw to finish off the job. Though his handiwork with wood was impressive, this priest's willingness to serve and to offer support shone through. This example has encouraged us to serve and support our own family on a daily basis.

This excerpt from the Companions of the Cross website effectively summarizes what we have learned about living as a community, "We strongly believe that, before we can do anything worthwhile for God, we first have to be something together." No matter the method, we have received support from the Companions of the Cross priests, which we feel is a reflection of the supportive community they live in. Through their dedication to sacraments, parish ministries, prayer and support, the Companions of the Cross priests have taught us many principles of community living which we have brought into our home.

Thank you Companions of the Cross priests for helping our family become more faith-filled and joyful! ☺

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*The Emmons family are parishioners of St. Maurice parish in Ottawa.*



## FEATURE

by Fr. Scott McCaig

# The Spirituality of the Companions of the Cross

The Lord has given the Church a rich diversity of communities that advance his Kingdom in the world. Each has a unique spirituality that is tailored to the call and mission the Lord has given them. The spirituality of a community permeates its whole life, uniting the members to the Lord and empowering them in their mission.

As Companions of the Cross, the lynchpin, the foundation, and the center of our spirituality is **Christ Crucified, the power and wisdom of God**. Our Constitutions describe our basic purpose as follows: "As Companions we strive by our life and ministry to exalt the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim Christ Crucified, who is God's power and wisdom" (C3).

We take our spiritual motto from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "*The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the learning of the learned I will set aside.' Where is the wise one? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made the wisdom of the world foolish.*"

*"For since in the wisdom of God the world did not come to know God through wisdom, it was the will of God through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who have faith. For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor 1:18-24)*

In the ancient world, most Greek philosophers believed that wisdom was the path to God. Great wisdom was understood as the goal of life and the sign of divine favour. For the Jews, however, it was power, not wisdom that demonstrated God's presence. If you could pull off miracles like the prophets, that was proof of closeness to God.

But the Cross shows us the true path to God: **faith**. It is the will of God to save those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. It is this faith that pleases God: a faith of **relationship**, of trust, and of personal adherence to him, accepting his work of salvation accomplished upon the Cross.

The Cross was a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles because it appeared so contrary to worldly ways of thinking. A dead man hanging on a cross does not seem like power. In fact, it seems to be the very epitome of weakness! An innocent man allowing himself to be condemned for crimes he didn't commit does not seem like wisdom. It seems to be foolishness! How could a man dying on a Cross, something so foolish and weak, accomplish the salvation of the whole world?

The answer is Love! The most powerful act of love ever accomplished was the destruction of the evil of our sins by Christ

Crucified. On the Cross, God manifests his almighty power through his love. Christ the foolish Lover gives himself away for his Beloved, the Church. According to the logic of love, this is perfect wisdom. Thus, the act of love in which Christ died perfectly manifests the power and wisdom of God. Truly, "*the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength*" (1 Cor 1:25)!

Christ Crucified is the **Power of God** because through his death he saves us from our sins. Christ Crucified is the **Wisdom of God** because through his death he shows that the way to the heart of God is through a personal response of love. This is why we give ourselves completely and unreservedly to Christ Crucified. This is why we preach Christ Crucified in a simple and compelling way, inviting everyone into a personal relationship with Jesus in the Church.

But the Triumph of the Cross was not the end of the story! Christ Crucified is now risen from the dead and reigns in glory as the Lord of all creation. Still bearing the wounds of the Cross in his hands and feet and side, "*He lives forever to make intercession*" for us (Heb 7:25). Jesus is alive and on the move! **Our spirituality is one of complete docility to the ongoing reign of Christ Crucified, the Power and Wisdom of God**. We listen for his wisdom, respond to his directions, and rely on his power to accomplish his will.



## The Lordship of Jesus

Our first response to Christ Crucified is a total surrender to his Lordship:

“Jesus Christ is Lord! Christ crucified has been exalted by the Father to be the Lord of all Creation. In response, every member is to declare himself personally under the total Lordship of Jesus Christ, and to live out this commitment in conscious daily submission to him as Saviour and Lord” (C27).

“As we surrender our lives and everything we do to him, give him full permission to

do with us as he wills, make ourselves completely available to him, and are committed totally to his purposes we clear the way for him to accomplish his will” (C23).

We surrender all our plans, ideas, responsibilities, and priorities to the Lord. We give him our hearts, our relationships, and every aspect of our lives. We belong unreservedly to him.

As a sign of total commitment to our crucified Lord we wear an image of a person embracing the Cross. But as our Founder Fr. Bob reminds us, “We will have to do more than wear the cross. We will have to carry it.” “We are determined to pick up our cross daily and follow the Lord, unit-

ing ourselves to the Passion of Christ and to his work of redemption” (C37).

## The Power and Wisdom of God

In surrendering to Christ Crucified, we seek to live in total reliance on his power and wisdom. We rely on the power of God precisely because we are “weak” (cf. 1 Cor 1:27). “We acknowledge the words of Jesus: ‘*Apart from me you can do nothing*’ (Jn 15:5)” (C22). We need the Holy Spirit to clothe us with power from on high according to the promise of Jesus (cf. Lk 24:49). We readily reaffirm the words of the archangel Gabriel to Mary: “*For* continued on page 18

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*with God nothing will be impossible”* (Lk 1:37).

We rely on the wisdom of God because human wisdom alone is hopelessly inadequate to even understand the ways of the Lord. More importantly, Jesus wants to run the Church and to personally guide us in our daily lives. First and foremost this entails our full obedience to the Word of God as it is authentically interpreted by the Church. “God’s **general** wisdom is mediated to us by the entire Church” (C25).

The Lord also desires to give us his **particular** wisdom, a “now word” for each one of us. “God’s particular wisdom guides his people, both as individuals and as a body of believers, and is communicated to those who seek it; provided they have the intention of carrying it out before they know what it is” (C26). God communicates his particular wisdom to us through the Holy Spirit in our personal and communal prayer. We govern our community, advance our mission, and live our entire lives in accordance with his particular wisdom. We seek it relentlessly and make no major moves without it.

## The Four Pillars

We often speak of the “four pillars” of our spirituality: (1) devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist, (2) consecration to Jesus through Mary, (3) openness to the Holy Spirit, and (4) faithfulness to the Magisterium. Each of these pillars is a fruit of the triumphant Cross and draws its life from Christ Crucified.

**Eucharistic** - Our devotion to the Eucharist flows from our devotion to Christ and his Cross because “the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated in the celebration of the Eucharist” (R51.3). The Eucharist makes present here and now the

triumphant work of the Cross! As Pope John Paul II said so beautifully, “The Eucharist thus applies to men and women today the reconciliation won once for all by Christ for mankind in every age. The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are **one single sacrifice**” (*Eucharistia de Ecclesia*, 12). For this reason, “we desire to be at the service of dynamic and more fruitful celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy by helping the people of God to enter more whole-heartedly into this act of worship of Christ to his Father in the power of the Holy Spirit” (R51.3). We promote adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as an extension of the Mass.

**Marian** - When almost all of the other disciples had run away in fear, Mary stood faithfully at the foot of the Cross with her Son. For this reason we recognize her as the first and perfect Companion of the Cross! We accept Mary as a precious gift from Jesus as he hung dying on the Cross. Just as John received Mary as his mother, we receive her as our own spiritual mother. “We wish to venerate and honour the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen, and to imitate her as the model of Christian discipleship” (C28). We consecrate ourselves to Jesus through Mary because true devotion to her “is a smooth, short, perfect and sure way of attaining union with our Lord” (St. Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary*). We “seek to practise and encourage true devotion to Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of priests, especially through individual and communal prayer of the Rosary” (R29.2).

**Charismatic** - Jesus said, “*If I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you*” (Jn 16:7). At the moment of his death he “*handed over the Spirit*” (Jn 19:31). The death of Jesus on the Cross won for us a new life in the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the Church at Pentecost. Therefore, “We believe that ‘the miracle of Pentecost should continue in history’ (Pope Paul VI, 17 October

1974) and, hence, we desire to be completely and fully empowered by the Father through the Holy Spirit, and to receive all the spiritual gifts, or ‘charisms’, that he may wish to bestow on us, including the Corinthian gifts (cf. 1 Cor 12:8-10)” (R51.1). Furthermore, “when the Gospel is authentically proclaimed, we should often expect to see confirming signs and wonders (cf. Ac 4:29-30) to give convicting power to the word, which will serve to accomplish God’s will including that deepest of all his desires - the conversion of the human heart” (C24).

**Magisterial** - The Church was born from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the Cross. The Church is the beloved bride of our crucified Lord. We have a deep love for the Church. As Fr. Bob explains, “from the earliest beginnings of the community, we have been strongly persuaded that we are to be loyal to the official teaching authority of the Church ... but this submission is not some kind of blind, unthinking, reactionary stand. Rather it is a free choice based on the common conviction of our Catholic faith. The Magisterium is the Lord’s own gift to his Church, a gift that keeps us clear-minded as we attempt to grow into authentic life in Christ.” (*Companions of the Cross*, p.17).

The spirituality of the Companions of the Cross is founded upon total docility to the ongoing reign of Christ Crucified, the Power and Wisdom of God. Devoted to Jesus in the Eucharist, consecrated to Jesus through Mary, radically open to the Holy Spirit, and faithful to the Magisterium, we strive to exalt the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to proclaim Christ Crucified. ☩

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*Fr. Scott McCaig is the Moderator of the Companions of the Cross. He was ordained in 1995.*

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# TESTIMONY

by Fr. Francis Ching

When people first met me and saw my white cane, a typical reaction was disbelief. There are two reasons: I still have enough vision to find my way quite well in familiar surroundings, but probably more so because I move really fast. Well, I am legally blind, and of late, more so than ever.

I was probably born with glaucoma. By Grade 4, I had to undergo surgery on both eyes. Since then, it progressively got worse. I developed cataract and retinitis pigmentosa. Eventually, I lost my right eye's central vision, with my left eye seriously compromised.

But I could still read books. In fact, miraculously I got through a Bachelor and a Master degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering, and I got through all the dense readings of the philosophy and theology program in preparation for priesthood.

People often have asked me, how did I do it? The only truthful answer is: I don't know. God must be wanting me to do it.

I remember distinctly that when I first understood the seriousness of my eye condition, I was quickly lavished with and strengthened by love. My mother told me at the outset that she would rather give up her eyes to save mine. Because of that, I was not afraid. I knew I was loved. She taught me that love was sufficient for me.

Growing up, there were of course many occasions of frustration and even humiliation. Yet I was strangely content. I learned that there was little I could change by worrying about it. It must have been God's grace: I accepted my brokenness. I learned to surrender my vision to God very early on. It was the only choice and so I embraced it, even with joy.

All this was brought to the fore in recent years as my eye condition took a downturn. Then last year, my cataract was get-

ting worse. I had to have surgery for my left eye, my good eye. This apparently must have triggered something so that my glaucoma suddenly began to destabilize by December of 2008. By April it became so serious I had to have an emergency surgery on Easter Tuesday. Then for 3 months excess scarring was blocking the artificial drainage created by the surgery to relieve the eye pressure.

During this whole process, I was surprisingly calm and cheerful. It was laborious to have to go to the hospital sometimes three times a week, but I learned anew to surrender. There is really nothing I can change. Only God can and he knows what he is doing. In fact, I took it by default that I might very well lose my sight. I was open to it. Meanwhile I was asking God for the grace to use well whatever sight he decided to give back to me. If I were to get back any sight, I did not want to use it for evil, but only for him.

The complications were finally under control in early July. For the first time in months, my vision was clear and crisp. But the months of rising and lowering of eye pressure has done its damage to the optic nerves. Suddenly, my vision began to blur but the doctors could not explain why. Then a couple days later, I lost my central vision completely. I had a macula hemorrhage.

I remembered that morning when I woke up and realized I couldn't see, I felt a sickness in my stomach and I wanted to vomit. I was scared. So I sat up and started praying: "If this is what you want, I offer it to you. I will accept it." There were no heroics here. It was simply the only prayer I could pray. I had to give it to God. If I held on to it, not just my sight, but my soul also would become dark. There was simply no other way. God was my only recourse.

And I was so glad he was there. Peace washed over me.



The doctors eventually found the problem, and thank God for medical science, that which was untreatable two years ago is now treatable. Some permanent damage is done with every macula hemorrhage, but I now have regained my central vision and much of my reading ability. Thanks be to God!

You can say that this is a miracle, and it is. But during this whole ordeal, a deeper miracle happened. When word got out about my sickness, many people, literally from all over the world, even strangers I have never met, offered prayers for me. Not only that, people who had never known what a "novena" was offered novenas for me. It was incredible and profoundly humbling. Think about it: if my suffering can bring people to pray, to cling to God, Amen, I will accept it.

I understand better now what St. Paul meant "to make up for what is lacking in the suffering of Christ" (Col 1:24). The love and prayer lavished on me told me that I was never suffering alone; they - the Church - are suffering with me. I also knew that what I suffered was not only my suffering, but in a mystical way I was also suffering the suffering of the Church, and Christ as her Head. I have only to offer it all to God. I can do that. There is really no other way anyway. ☩

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*Fr. Francis Ching is from Toronto, Ontario and was ordained to the priesthood in 2005.*



## FEATURE

by Dale Balkovec

# *Spirit Alive at St. Maurice Parish*

**W**hat does renewal by the Holy Spirit look like? An oft-quoted observation of Fr. Bob's proved true once again on the evening of October 29, 2009 at St. Maurice Parish: from the God's-eye view (achieved by peering from the mezzanine into the vast spaces of the atrium below) things were looking decidedly "messy"!

Picture a sea of empty chairs, painstakingly arranged into 30 semi-circular groupings yet somehow remaining oriented en masse towards a speaker's corner. Hear the chatter of 170 men and women, a cross-section of parishioners from young adults to octogenarians being funnelled through a single registration area to receive a number with which to hunt for their assigned small group. But know that each was responding to the invitation to delve more deeply into the mystery of the third person of the Trinity and to experience the fullness of life offered. Then you will understand how the first sign of the Spirit alive among us was in the order and peace that ultimately descended and prevailed throughout! For seven consecutive Thursday evenings, 130-150 participants were held in rapt attention to speakers, or huddled deep in discussion within small groups. At times we stood to sing and pray together, and at times we scattered for quiet personal prayer. But always, from the God's-eye view, we were enfolded in the heart of the Father, where the idea for *Spirit Alive* was born.

Fr. Galen Bank has been reading the heart of our Father for this parish for eight



years. He knows well that much rich ground has been broken open through 45 years of history, many seeds planted and watered by the joys, sorrows, prayers, and efforts of pastors and parishioners. He recognizes growth in natural and spiritual realms. But while we have been experiencing the fruits of a recently renewed physical home, he and his pastoral team have been discerning the time to challenge us to "go deeper" in search of spiritual renewal. How could they facilitate a life-changing personal encounter with the Holy Spirit, a "personal Pentecost", on a parish-wide level? Among the many desired fruits, they hoped for new gifts to be raised up and called forth to build up the community and bolster the ranks of existing leadership in ministry.

The discernment had begun with long-time associate Fr. Yves Marchildon, and continued with the current team of Fr. Simon Lobo and Deacon David Bergeron, all in a spirit of faithfulness to the vision of their spiritual father, Fr. Bob Bedard: **give God permission to move and trust that he will; prayerfully seek and wait**

**on his word; then act on it.** As Fr. Simon might say, "The process was not always pretty", but through it God revealed his heart's desire – *Spirit Alive* would be an experience of the Spirit tailor-made for St. Maurice Parish, crafted by the pastoral team under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

A basic format for 1.5 hours per evening was developed, simple in execution and realistic for people to commit to. A shepherding (small group) model was incorporated to encourage faith sharing after most talks, and to build community among participants. Sufficient shepherds were called forth from parish ranks and equipped to lead 30 groups of 5-6 participants each. A series of topics for nine, 20-minute talks was discerned for the first five nights. The roster of speakers invited to take part was itself a beautiful picture of the Body of Christ in action, uniting in mission a diversely gifted group from among the friends of the Companions of the Cross.

Debbie & Alex Sinclair of the Holy Family Centre opened *Spirit Alive*, first

with her witness to the foundation of the spiritual life – the knowledge and experience of unconditional love that brings us into healing, life-giving relationship as sons and daughters of God. Alex offered witness to and suggestions for nurturing that relationship through prayer.

On night two, Andre Regnier and Holly Chevalier of Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO), walked us through the salvation story, and presented the invitation to accept personally the mercy and Lordship of Jesus. As if to assure us of his presence and sovereign power among us, the Holy Spirit jumped the agenda that night, and powerfully moved one heart to conversion. Although this woman had never before spoken publicly to a crowd, she opened night three with her personal witness. “Old” stories of conversion in the group were rekindled and reaffirmed, while the general sense of expectation grew. How appropriate that Martha Sheppard of Madonna House Ottawa next contrasted the freedom the world offers (“Freedom 55?”) with a story illustrating the fruit of mature surrender to Jesus: freedom in Christ.

One participant commented at the beginning of night four, “finally, we get to the Holy Spirit, the reason I came!” Drawing from Scripture and the Catechism, Fr. Terry Donahue, CC packed his 20 minutes of anointed teaching with clear, precise answers to the densely theological question: Who is the Holy Spirit? Michael Dopp, former CC seminarian and married lay evangelist, challenged us to examine how deeply we believe this good news, in order to stir evangelical hearts to a sense of mission for sharing good news with others. In answer to our fears and hesitations, Fr. Scott McCaig helped us to understand on night five what God offers through the “empowerment” or “baptism” in the Holy Spirit. He left us with a description of 24 commonly recognized spiritual gifts, many of which were witnessed to by Brian O’Neill, former CC seminarian, in his testimony. We were encouraged to pray with scriptures of the Holy Spirit and with the descriptions of

the gifts, all to prepare our hearts for night six, an evening of prayer ministry for baptism in the Holy Spirit. Many of the speakers returned to pray with us, bringing colleagues from their ministries, along with several CC priests and the Servants of the Cross.

As I entered the church for the evening of prayer, I was struck by the image before me. Dressed in Advent garb, the dimly candlelit space was as warm, comforting and pregnant with hidden life and power as the womb of our Mother Mary. There was an air of quiet excitement, anticipation and openness as the Blessed Sacrament was exposed on the altar and we were led through a group prayer for baptism in the Holy Spirit. A gentle Spirit enfolded us, expressed tangibly through the anointed music ministry of Fr. Simon’s mother, Maria Lobo. When time for individual prayer began, at least half the church rose at once to approach the 12 prayer teams! When everyone had received prayer, incense rose as we closed with Benediction. One married couple described the evening as their “best date ever”!

Our final evening of *Spirit Alive* was an opportunity to share with our small groups the stories of the Spirit’s work. Several brave individuals took the mic to share publicly. Many had been filled with a deep sense of God’s presence and love, or peace and rest. There were many inspired words and images of comfort, affirmation or challenge received. One woman, usually highly allergic to perfumes, was blessed with a succession of scents during Adoration that brought no discomfort, only peace and joy. Several reported their personal prayer lives strengthened, some the sudden courage to pray with others or to witness in everyday situations. One lady’s natural gift of encouragement was unexpectedly anointed to a supernatural level during her weekly visit to an elderly sister..both were taken by surprise at the words now flowing from within her! Each touch of the Spirit seemed tailor-made for a beloved child whose needs and situation were known by God alone. Gentleness

and joy had prevailed. The Spirit had indeed blessed our “mess” with heavenly “finesse”.

Our time together concluded with food and fellowship, two key components of life in the Spirit at St. Maurice. But first Fr. Simon shared the story of how *Spirit Alive* came to be. A video clip connected us tangibly to Fr. Bob’s wisdom and humour for the work of renewal. Then Fr. Simon described the visit he and Deacon David enjoyed with Fr. Bob after the evening of prayer ministry. Like the disciples returning from their first solo missions, they were eager to share the stories of the Spirit’s work in *Spirit Alive*. With a sense of fulfillment, as in handing on a torch, Fr. Bob affirmed them, “I need to be hearing these stories again...but now from you.”

Many *Spirit Alive* attendees have since admitted feeling a little bereft on Thursday evenings. But from the God’s-eye view, they experience a deeper sense of personal connection within the larger parish community. Many eyes and hearts have been widened to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit within and among us. Spiritual gifts are being recognized; the call to share them is on people’s hearts; and we’re all asking what comes next. Indeed, much is only beginning, particularly for discipleship and the calling forth of gifts for ministry.

How will all of this happen? According to the vision, *change will flow more easily from a renewed people*. Led by our pastors, there will undoubtedly be more prayer, more discernment, more waiting on the Lord, more wisdom...and more grace and work for all!

Come, Holy Spirit! ☪

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*Dale grew up in St. Maurice Parish and returned there with her husband, George, and boys in 1993. Currently, she is the coordinator of the parish’s Family Formation Ministry.*



## COMMUNITY NEWS & NOTES

by Fr. Rick Jaworski

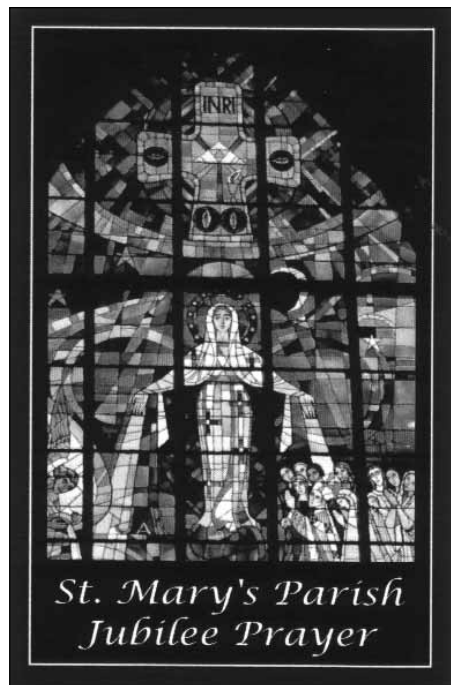
### 25th Anniversary Year

In ancient times, some calendars started in the spring, some in the summer, some in the autumn, and others in the winter. It's one of the reasons some events are classified as happening in year "x" or year "x+1". Nowadays, there's the liturgical year (starting with Advent), calendar year, fiscal year, school year, and so on. Here at the Companions of the Cross office, we're focussing on the calendar year to celebrate our 25th anniversary.

At St. Mary's Parish in Ottawa, they began a little earlier to celebrate our Founder Fr. Bob Bedard's arrival at the parish and the establishment of the Companions of the Cross. Fr. Roger Vandenaeker prayerfully felt that this year was going to be a real time of grace for the parish. Recognizing that fruitfulness also depends on us, Fr. Roger instituted a programme of preparation for a consecration to Jesus through Mary held on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12.

Moving... in the right direction. After renovations, St. Timothy's Parish in Toronto was supposed to be back in the church for Masses on December 24, just in time for Christmas.

God will move if we let him, if we are humble, open, and docile to the Holy Spirit. When Fr. Scott McCaig went on mission to Zimbabwe, the local bishop planned on coming to just one talk. He stayed for the entire conference. Now the contact priest over there for the conference has been tasked with making the whole diocese charismatic, and the bishop has invited us to come back next August to put on Life in the Spirit Seminars for all the priests, sisters, and catechists.



Halifax parishioners were invited to Catch the Fire at a September conference and October & November Life in the Spirit Seminars. One woman said it made it the best year she had ever had in that parish. St. Maurice Parish in Ottawa's seven week Spirit Alive course had a large turnout, and proved to be a major, wonderful focus. And, of course, true to its name, the Catholic Charismatic Center

in Houston has its Faith into Fire of the Holy Spirit Retreat January 30 & 31st; courses in formation and evangelization; video teachings; concerts; "Alive in the Spirit Gatherings"; and much more.

This ties in with what a number of leaders in the renewal are sensing. Let us be bold and unapologetic in promoting the Charismatic Renewal that is God's answer to what we need. Let us renew our zeal for holiness, for God's word in sacred Scripture, and for evangelization. No one should presume salvation and coast along in life. *"I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!"* (Lk 12:49) In formation at Assumption Farm, one of the newer men, upon hearing a recording of Fr. Bob for the first time, remarked, "He's really got a fire!" Yes, and we need it too, and should pray for it.

### Mary, Mother of the Poor

We hear of Jesus stopping his preaching to cure a paralytic brought to him (Mk 2:1-12), and of hermits leaving their solitude to attend to the needy person at their door. God's call can come to us in the

middle of our plans, in the duty of the moment. Back in October, the flooding in the Philippines turned some of Fr. Fernando's scheduled healing Masses into relief operations, bringing food, clothing, and doctors to the thousands of people affected by the natural disaster.

Plans for the Montemaria Shrine site have expanded and the first chapel has been completed. It is dedicated to the Infant Child Jesus, one of the most popular Catholic devotions in the Philippines, dating back to the first Spanish settlers of the 16th century. The chapel—at the time of this writing—is due to be officially consecrated on January 18. A Forty-Hour Eucharistic Vigil will take place January 15-17. The vigil of the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, January 1, will be celebrated with Mass; veneration of an image of Our Lady; fireworks; dinner; a play; and a chorale festival. God has abundantly blessed us through Mary, and we honour her giving glory and thanks back to God.

When too busy, Moses heeded the advice of his father-in-law and got help (Ex 18). In like manner, Fr. Francis Donnelly will be joining our men in the Philippine's Batangas Foundation as Vicar for the Moderator (Fr. Scott McCaig) effective January 21, 2010. Not yet having perfected the art of bilocating, Fr. Scott has appointed Fr. John Vandenkakker to replace Fr. Francis as Vicar for the Moderator in Houston TX.

### At the Office

Gino Chiumera has come on board as bookkeeper. His brother Dino is already providing us with some financial services. Welcome aboard Gino!



### Sparrows and the Hairs on our Head

Jesus wept. We may not mourn as those with no hope, as St. Paul says, but that doesn't mean that we don't mourn. Fr. Galen Bank's father Samuel died after complications in high-risk surgery and lung cancer. Please pray for the repose of his soul and for the family's consolation. Fr. Simon Lobo and Deacon David Bergeron both had grandfathers die. Fr. Michael Minifie's father passed away in December. Fr. Michael made several trips back to Canada from Houston to see his father.

Some were out for a bit due to either catching the H1N1 virus or from side-effects of the vaccination. Fr. Randy

Hendriks turned 36. I won't say how old (or young?) Fr. Yves Marchildon is, but he found an over 35 hockey league to play in near Assumption Farm.

And, mourning for some, the snow finally came, forcing Fr. Mark Goring to cease roller-blading to the Chaplaincy at York University after December 8. The Chaplaincy, where he's having a "blast" amidst a constant frenzy of activity. There are faith studies for the students five days a week. Our men studying in Toronto have been able to attend a number of charismatic conferences and healing Masses. (Fr. Mark also reports that they are also working very hard at their studies, are quite intelligent, and a good presence in the house.) Incidentally, they are true "companions" sharing bread made by their new bread-maker.

*continued on page 24*

What's out east? Lighthouses, priests, our men. And so Fr. Rob Arsenault gave a reflection on the priest as lighthouse at a day of recollection for the priests of the Archdiocese of Halifax, hosted by our men. They also hosted four men discerning priesthood on another occasion. In and out. Fr. Allan MacDonald gave a retreat for religious sisters; twas the season to hear many confessions; and St. John the Baptist marked its 80th anniversary.

*“There was much else that Jesus did; if it were written down in detail, I do not suppose the world itself would hold all the books that would be written.” (Jn 21:25) But... for a few more items, see the news flash photos.* ☺

*Fr. Rick Jaworski has a licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He was ordained in 1990.*



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at **613-725-2168** if you would  
like a copy of the catalogue.

### COMPANIONS OF THE CROSS STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Year Ended  
August 31, 2009

#### REVENUE

General Donations	\$ 1,082,948
Legacies and Bequests	91,523
Gifts-in-Kind	251,784
Other Income	90,856
Reimbursed Expenses	303,858

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<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,820,969</b>
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#### EXPENDITURES

Administration	\$ 213,370
Amortization	67,587
Communications	117,192
Financing Charges	12,317
Fundraising	188,949
Intra-Community	242,278
Outreach Programs	49,085
Programs for the Laity	60,349
Non-Local Priests	279,407
Residential Operations	323,637
Seminarian Formation	316,065

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<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$1,870,236</b>
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Operating Loss	(49,267)
Gain on disposal of capital assets	106,247
Loss on disposal of investments	(35,686)
Excess of Revenue over expenditures	21,294

Notes:

We carry liabilities of \$493,305.

The Statements of the Companions of the Cross have been audited by our auditors Parker, Prins & Lebano Chartered Accountants.

We are grateful to all our spiritual and temporal benefactors for their prayers and financial support over the past year. May the Lord bless you abundantly for your generosity.

# News Flashes



*Life in the Spirit seminar was held at St. Michael's parish in Spryfield, NS. The seminar ran for six weeks on Thursday nights, having close to 100 participants.*



*Fr. Michael Minifie and Fr. John Paul Bolger with children in "Matchines" costume dress for feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Queen of Peace, Houston.*



*From the top down: Fr. Rick Jaworski, Christine Labrosse, Shannon Kalyniak, Melinda Schenher, Mary Lauzon, Ken Gorman, Fr. Scott McCaig, Maria Norton. Beside the stairs from the front: Linda O'Donnell, Dino Chiumera, Gino Chiumera*



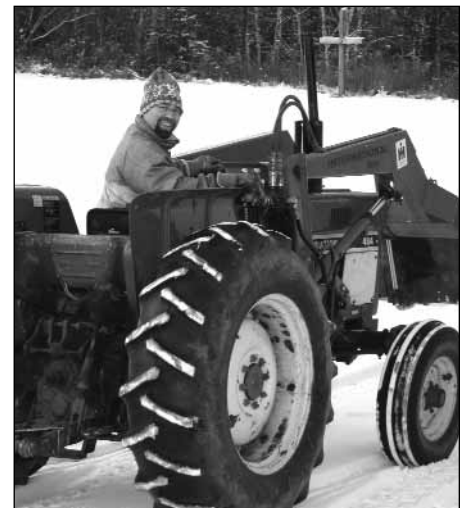
*From left: Bryan Sabourin, Fr. Mark Goring, Fr. Daren Bryk and Lawrence Hyginus at York Chaplaincy, Toronto*



*Fr. Simon Lobo and Deacon David Bergeron at Opening Vigil for 40 Days for Life in Ottawa.*



*Fr. Charles Orchard celebrating Feast of the Immaculate Conception at St. Timothy's temporary residence.*



*Fr. Yves Marchildon working at Assumption Farm.*



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***“If the Lord does  
not build the house,  
in vain do the  
builders labour.”  
(Psalm 121:1)***